CONSCIOUS IMMORTALITY

ENLIGHTENMENT AS A REAL EXPERIENCE

Roy Eugene Davis

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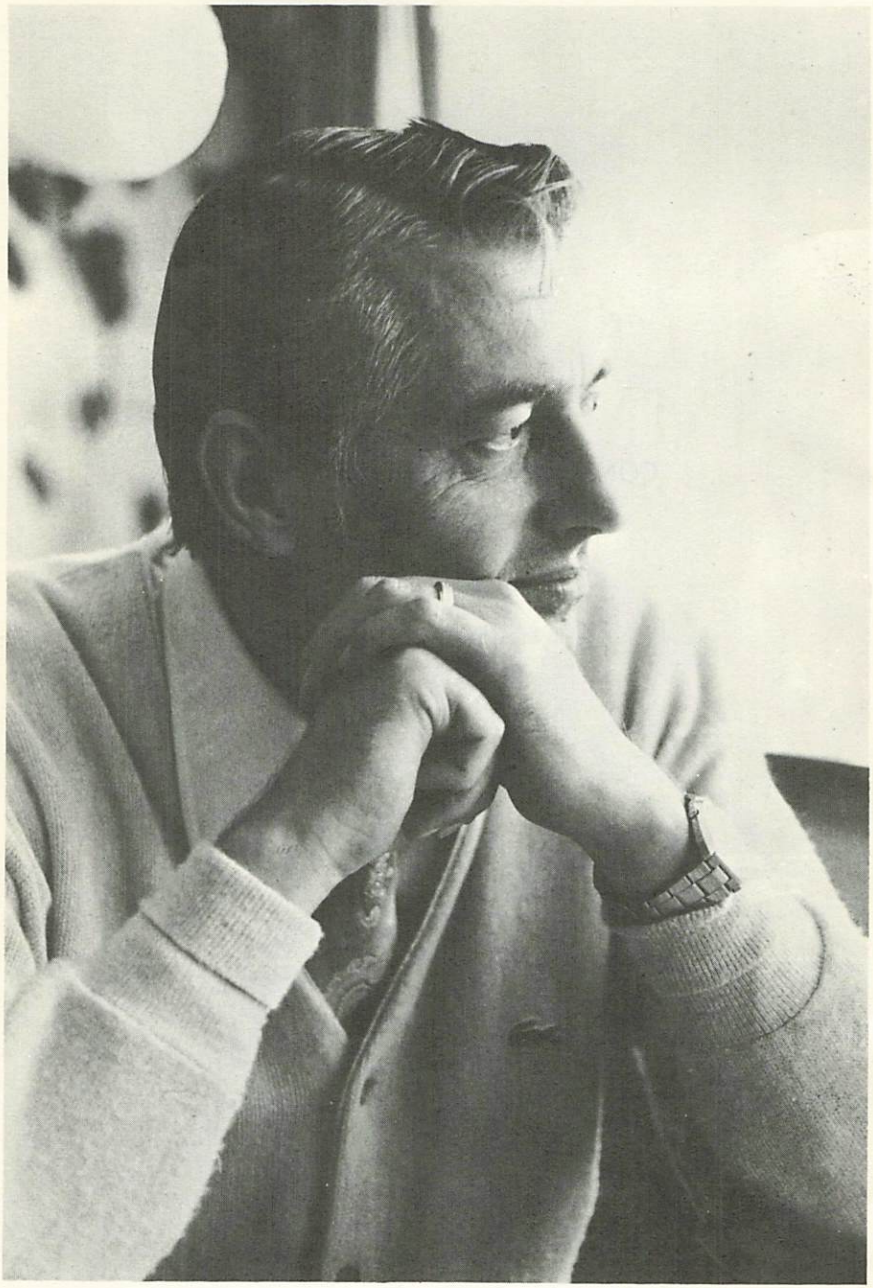

I salute the supreme teacher, the Truth,
whose nature is bliss, who is the giver
of the highest happiness, who is pure
wisdom, who is beyond all qualities and
infinite like the sky, who is beyond words,
who is one and eternal, pure and still,
who is beyond all change and phenomena
and who is the silent witness to all our
thoughts and emotions—I salute Truth,
the supreme teacher.

—Ancient Vedic Hymn

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WITH GOD We CAN!

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FOREWORD

What is the ideal life? Every thinking person has, at one time or another, pondered this matter of the ideal life in the known world. By the "known world" I refer to the realm we perceive through our sense channels, the world as we understand it. As conscious beings, we can be aware of inner realms, and we can be aware of the grand cosmic process taking place between the source of all life and the outer limits referred to as the physical universe. An unconscious person, one who is totally unaware of the truth about life, has no such problem because he is involved in doing what he does to survive and to cope with his limited understanding. A partially aware person may ponder the meaning of life, but he, too, is often caught in the maze of getting through this present life-cycle with a minimum of pain and hardship. Many people know life only as that interval between the cradle and the grave, and somehow they adjust to this seeming inevitable situation. In this book I address myself to the newly conscious person as well as to the almost-conscious. Sometimes the newly conscious person needs direction and reinforcement, and, often, the almost-conscious person requires gentle encouragement to awaken yet more fully. An enlightened person who has entered into the flow of grace will not require any further instruction, for he is possessed of total understanding and is supremely free.

The life pattern of a conscious person will be according to personal destiny. Whatever God *as* the person needs to do will be done. A conscious person may live in very simple circumstances or the lifestyle may be truly elegant, according to personal taste. There can be no ego-drive or fulfillment of compulsive subconscious needs for an enlightened person. For the almost-conscious person there may be blending of near-harmony and almost-fulfillment mixed with the little outer trappings that go along with working out (neutralizing) desires and whims. Also, even with a conscious person, there may be, for a time, the need to completely clear the subconscious of remaining patterns which have been dormant. For a truly enlightened man or woman there seems to be the dominant willingness to allow personal destiny to unfold in harmony with God's will for the soul nature. Unenlightened observers may try to judge an enlightened person by outer evidence at hand. One might wrongly conclude that it is not "right" for a conscious person to be rich and comfortable because a usual concept of saintliness is that of poverty and even severe environmental conditions. On the other hand, an observer may wrongly conclude that an enlightened person in a simple environment cannot really be possessed of understanding because, if he were, he would use the principles of imagination and will to create a really impressive lifestyle as an example for others to emulate. The conditioned mind cannot grasp the reality of the enlightened mind. It is far better for each person to see to his own enlightenment than it is for him to busy himself with criticism of others.

It is my experience that enlightened men and women do what they do because of inner knowing and true inner guidance. Enlightened people come in all colors, shapes, and sizes. They are found in all cultural conditions and in every walk of life. We meet conscious beings on the street and we do not recognize them. We work alongside of them in the office or the manufacturing plant and we have no idea of their real inner condition. We find them in high

places and we overlook them in obscure places. We even live with them in our own family circle and we acknowledge them not. What a wonderful and enjoyable game God has arranged! An enlightened person may be obvious because of his glow and because of his obvious outer mission. On the other hand, an enlightened person may be cheerfully playing out an undramatic role. Your husband, your wife, your child, your neighbor . . . may be God's gift to the world and to you.

Enlightenment is a real experience. One who is enlightened is fully conscious and is not given to hallucinations or to strange flights of mental fancy. An enlightened person knows the truth about the process of life as life unfolds and expresses. To know the truth about the nature of God, the nature of the soul and the way life works is to be free indeed. Blind belief is not the way of a conscious person. Early in our quest it can be useful to surrender fully to an enlightenment teaching and to an enlightened teacher. In time we must come into our own understanding born of insight. When understanding is experienced in full brilliance, there will be no further questions, for answers-without-questions will be known. With true understanding we experience a settled peace that far surpasses human grasping.

This present work includes recent articles which first appeared in *Truth Journal* magazine, of which I am editor-publisher, as well as articles from other published sources and new material added. This is not a textbook; this is an inspiration-to-action book. I want to make quite clear the truth that you are already, at the deepest level of your being, already enlightened. You have always been enlightened, you are now enlightened, you will be enlightened forever. I acknowledge your permanently real nature.

July 31, 1978
Lakemont, Georgia

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

- Jesus

Chapter 1

RESOLVING INNER CONFLICT ABOUT TEACHERS, SYSTEMS and WAYS TO KNOWLEDGE

As one listens to conversations in the metaphysical field, one often hears a version of: "All teachings and all systems are good in their own way." This is a statement resulting from unclear thinking. One might amend the statement thusly: "All valid systems and all true teachings are useful to those seeking understanding." Not all systems are useful and not all teachings are clear and based on truth. We define truth here as: "That which is so about the nature of Consciousness, God, the soul and the world order."

One should respect all valid systems and all true teachings. One should have sufficient powers of discernment to tell the difference between a system or a teaching offered as a result of incomplete revelation versus systems and teachings offered out of true insight and understanding of life. Ancient seers spoke of true knowledge and of false knowledge. A modern way of phrasing might point out the difference between true information versus incomplete data regarding a given subject. We are ever reminded that when we know the truth we will be free. How free we are is an indication of how clear our understanding is. Is our

understanding clear? Or are we confused, and do we experience inner conflict when we think in terms of teachers, systems and ways to enlightenment?

Some tests of a teaching or a system are available. Is our program useful to us as far as clearing mind and enabling us to function intelligently and realistically in this world? Is our program essentially that which has been taught by enlightened people through the centuries? Is our program (and our philosophy) supported by the great scriptures of the world? Does our program offer us the opportunity to gain personal insight or does it call for us to believe without experiencing?

There is certainly nothing wrong with our reading from various sources as long as we can discern the essence of truth from that which we read. If, however, we read too widely and find ourselves becoming mentally confused, it might be well to specialize for a time until insight is had and we are able to translate knowledge into practical daily experience. The ideal is to have a balance between reading, meditation and contemplation, and in practical living experience. When reading too widely results in excessive examination of concepts to the exclusion of meditation and practical living, we find our mental computer jammed. Attention to the basics is ever recommended. Yearn to know but be not impatient, we are advised. Be cheerful and optimistic and yet be practical, we are counseled. Meditate deeply and then be on open terms with our environment, we are encouraged. Always, we are informed, trust God and the intelligence of God which is regulating all natural processes. How very simple it seems! How very simple it is, in essence. What is required is attention to detail, not because this will cause enlightenment, but because this is the way of one who is enlightened.

So Much is Offered a New Student. How to Know the Way to Proceed?

I frequently talk with seekers who are not yet decided

as to the path of intentional discipline which is for them. One might ask, "I love a certain teacher's books and feel a warm place in my heart about his teaching . . . but I am also attracted to other systems which seem to offer a faster way. What am I to do?" I can only recommend prayer, resting in the silence for honest inner response, and then following through with the common sense path. It is always God to whom we go; systems and teaching are but channels through which experience is made possible. God first, then follow what seems best from the soul level of guidance. Do not be afraid to respond to inner guidance. We do not need to forever ask another his opinion. His guidance is for him. Our guidance is for ourselves. I feel that one should be true to the practices of the teaching tradition through which one finds the greatest soul happiness and true insight. It is often as easy to become caught up in the excitement of a spiritual path as it is to become caught up in the snares of sense-oriented situations.

Also, sometimes we delude ourselves into concluding that we are on the spiritual path when, in fact, we are involved in routines and relationships as before . . . but we "talk" metaphysics. For instance, some will socialize with friends who speak in metaphysical terms and who discuss the latest book or the latest happening in the field—and then feel they are in a "spiritual" activity. They are, in fact, doing what they always did, but their subject of conversation is different. No better and no worse, just different. We may take course after course, read all the new books, and attend every available seminar only to find that after a while we are still too outwardly directed and we have little or no inner peace. While it is useful to associate with like-minded friends, we must not assume that just because our group is an "in-the-know" group we are truly facing the challenge of self-change. Too much need for outer reassurance and outer support neutralizes the cleansing experience of the psyche which can be the result of deep soul-examination.

Some, in an honest quest for a genuine soul experi-

ence, will become involved with emotion instead of experiencing clear perception. They then mistake the emotionalism experienced as soul ecstasy when, in fact, it is merely strong feeling as a result of emotional instability. Getting "high" or "into a neat space" is not the same as remaining conscious, aware, and supremely clear and soul-possessed. To wriggle, jump around and experience convulsions during devotional practices is not necessarily evidence of Kundalini awakening; it may merely be evidence of our releasing suppressed emotions or a way of getting a "kick" out of our worship session. Visions, shifts in awareness, and dramatic inner perceptions may be evidence of inner cleansing . . . or they may just be evidence of an unsettled mind. Only a qualified meditation teacher can tell the difference as a result of being able to correctly diagnose the situation.

What is often neglected, by one early in the quest, is the need for attention to the essentials so that one's spiritual unfoldment rests upon a firm physical and psychological base. As one has put it, the awakening of deeper energies can result in the blossoming of a spiritual flower or (if preliminary requirements are not met) a weed gone out of control. It is an axiom of this path that if one has not seen to psychological preparation prior to undertaking advanced meditation practices, even if increased abilities are unfolded, the person will not know how to make wise use of them. Soul power which is allowed to flow into the appropriate channels of service is God's blessing to the human race, soul power that is directed from psychological compulsion or ego-need results only in compounding already complex situations. If we have been in this work long enough, we have all seen occasions where a person possessed of dynamic will and a degree of charm has used this to personal advantage and used people in the process.

Restricting Circumstances Can Result in Frustration and Self-Deception

Are we allowing personal circumstances to frustrate

us? Or are we handling the situation and clearing conditions in our life? Remember, it is here in the arena of daily experience that we are tested to see how really conscious and how really possessed of understanding we are. Are we solving our problems or are we allowing problems to persist, while using meditation and reading as an escape from facing challenge? Sometimes we put up with a restricting domestic situation or an unhappy job condition because we are not sure how to clear the problems. When outer conditions which cause inner tension are allowed to persist for a long period of time, we experience a build-up of deepseated tensions which restricts the flow of nerve force and stifles soul initiative. Inability to solve personal problems is often one of the reasons why some people seek a philosophy of fantasy and the unreal. Out of desperation one may find solace in presumed (imagined) contact with ascended masters and spirit guides. Such fanciful mental excursions will not solve our problems, but they allow us to put up with unpleasant conditions while we hold to the thought that, in time, the outer conditions will fade away by themselves, sometime. Another escape from handling what needs to be handled is to become preoccupied with "past lives," one's karmic condition, and/or too much experimentation with the paranormal. There is a useful purpose, of course, in objective research which leads to understanding. All too often, with persons who are not into a program of wise study and correct meditation practice, preoccupation with such matters becomes merely an opportunity to avoid the responsibility of needed inner transformation.

There are several approaches to problem solving. One way is to clearly examine the problem and use common sense (with fairness to all concerned, if others are involved) and see the solution . . . then act to clear the problem. If we are having trouble with relationships, perhaps we need to learn to relate more openly and to communicate clearly. We may even have to change relationships. If we are having a physical problem, perhaps we need to learn to take

better care of our body temple, with attention to diet, exercise, rest, and a positive mental attitude. If we are having a problem because of limited resources, perhaps we need to open the windows of the mind to a flow of life in the form of things. Perhaps we need to learn how to render a true and useful service to others and our world. If we are confused because of having exposed the mind to too many conflicting philosophical theories, perhaps we need to settle into one approach for a little while in order to test the principles in our lives.

Often we have a problem in one area or another because we are merely preoccupied with problems instead of being involved with opportunity. I often ask a person who comes to me with a problem what his life will be like when he is free of the problem. The frequent response is: "I'm so busy looking at the problem I don't have the time or energy to think of the future and of future goals." That response in itself explains the real problem. There are some problems (though not all) which will simply cease to be when we release them from mind and consciousness. Some situations need to be released . . . as well as affirmative action taken. Once we are steady in understanding and are no longer problem-oriented, we do not attract problems into our lives anymore.

A useful project might be to make a list of current restricting conditions in our life at the moment and clear the conditions one by one . . . or, with a major change in attitude and behavior, clear them all at one time. Self-actualization, the experience of functioning creatively with few or no restricting conditions, is the ideal for us in this world. There will always be outer challenges as we set goals and handle ourselves in relationship to the changing environmental scene, but we should be able to function with all available inner resources at our command and handle ourselves easily in time and space.

Why do we fool around with little self-created problems? Why do we procrastinate, make excuses, work against ourselves, and choose to remain in bondage? Some-

times we fear the unknown, we are afraid to face a new way of life, so we continue in our pattern of limitation. Sometimes it is because we do not know any better. Sometimes we know better but do not do better. The most direct route to freedom is to make the most bold of all moves in attitude and surrender (release) all beliefs, opinions, personality games and attitudes, and simply accept the truth about our nature. When the mental-emotional nonsense is dropped, we then shine brightly as unrestricted pure consciousness. When the confusion is released from the mind, then into that receptive mental field shines the light of the soul. Such a mind, filled with soul light, is referred to as the Buddha mind, the Christ mind or the mind of Light.

Attunement With the Ideal

How are we to drop all pretense and live out of soul awareness? We do not do it by duplicating the lifestyle of another who is living out of soul awareness. This would make us a copy of another's pattern. This would still be a superimposition of an idea upon the mind. Emulation is the ideal, not imitation. We can read of the lives of the saints. We can read the great scriptures of the world. We can contemplate in the silence and inquire, "What is my real nature, hidden behind the confusion of the mind?" As we rest in the silence and contemplate that which is behind the mind, that which observes mental processes and that which changes not, we are able to acknowledge the truth of our own being as witness-consciousness. Witness-consciousness changes not; it is ever the same regardless of the stream of thoughts that flow through the mind and the surges of feelings which are evident.

Do we have a daily routine to reinforce our intention on the path to be clear and centered always? Our daily meditation and study routine will keep us clear minded and intent upon the high purpose for which we are here. One's routine might be that of exercise, meditation and

inspirational reading, or it might be merely a time of quiet prayer and reflection. Many times during the day we can mentally say, "This is the day the Lord has provided; I rejoice and I am glad." When we open the windows of the mind we see so many opportunities and we experience so much unexpected good. Life fulfills itself through us and around us beautifully when we are open to it and in the flow.

As a Life-giving spirit I understand who and what I am. I am no longer confused about teachings, systems, or ways to knowledge. Always I rest in peace and understanding.

"There is a quiet place within each person. It is from this place we view our world in perfect peace and poise."

Chapter 2

BEING CENTERED ALL THE TIME

We all know people who, no matter what the seeming challenge they presently face, are calm and at peace within themselves. We often wonder, "How do they do it?" Of course, some people seem to have been born with a natural calm, an easygoing manner, and the ability to stay calm and collected as they handle whatever responsibilities they face. Other people we know seem to be easily put out of sorts at the smallest challenge or unexpected change in their routine. There are those, too, who seem to be inwardly insecure no matter how well their outer world seems to be ordered.

How is it with us as we face our day? Are we calm and settled, relaxed and on top of matter? Or are we nervous and anxious, tense and confused by the pressures of too many decisions? Are we calm most of the time, but now and then easily upset and made nervous?

Some Practical Ideas

If we are calm and settled and in control of ourselves in relationship to others and the decisions we face, we are fairly well self-actualized. That is, we are using our abilities and talents intelligently and in a goal-directed manner. We probably have a positive self-image (a healthy opinion of

ourselves and our abilities), and we are able to see the larger picture. Some people do not have a positive self-image. They look in the mirror and see there reflected a nice looking person who is well educated and who appears to have all the positive qualities, but, for some inner reason, a sense of insecurity persists. It may be due to traumatic experiences in early life. It may be due to unusual self-consciousness and shyness. It may be due to fear of failure. What may be needed, then, is specific work on the attitude and planned preformance to set and reach goals in order to build self-confidence.

One who is in need of a change in self-image, and adjustment in mental attitude and confidence as a result of successful performance, may do well to read our book, *How You Can Use the Technique of Creative Imagination* (CSA Press, publishers).

But it will not be enough for one merely to use the creative visualization process to change inner attitudes, one will have to follow-through with positive action in order to complete the process, experience *successful doing*, and receive some positive reinforcement as a result of accomplishment. After a change in attitude, it is the experience of relating and accomplishing that fulfills the cycle of action and *proves* to the subconscious level of mind that a new way of looking at life and a new way of relating to life is a healthier and more fulfilling way of living. This experience will neutralize the negative or unwanted subconscious patterns. Sometimes we have to prove to ourselves that we are capable, functional and altogether all right.

Some people have a sense of insecurity because, while they appear all right to friends and associates, they inwardly acknowledge their fears, guilt feelings and private fantasies. They then judge themselves unworthy and remain unsettled and unhappy. Self-acceptance must be learned by many of us: the inward knowing that we are already acceptable to Life, to God, and all we have to do is to get clear within ourselves. Our thoughts and feelings are not us. Thoughts and feelings are subject to change and

spring from a variety of causes; we, however, are changeless beings because we are the ones to witness the flow of thoughts and feelings. The very moment we assert, "My thoughts seem sometimes out of control," we are bearing witness to the fact that we are observing the mental process. Therefore we cannot be that which we observe. With gentle intention and a willingness to practice, we can regulate mental processes and cease being the victim of surges of feelings. We can be centered and at peace even while working to harmonize the psychological nature.

Sometimes we are on the defensive because we expect too much reassurance from others, too much recognition and acceptance. Of course, it is nice to have others give us recognition and tell us they appreciate us, but, if we are dependent upon this input and it is not immediately forthcoming, we place ourselves in a precarious position, that of needing our environment to acknowledge us in order to cause a sense of fullness and all rightness.

Some in this position, failing to receive input or feeling inadequate because of depending upon it, withdraw within themselves and assert, "I don't need anyone in my life!" They become aloof and they tend to insulate themselves from natural interactions. Communication with others is healthy. Communication with our world is healthy. The secret is to learn to communicate, really communicate, in a mature manner without needs of any kind. When we are experiencing good communication with others, this is an enjoyable experience. When we are alone with our thoughts and alone with our creative activites, we can still inwardly find this to be an enjoyable experience. We can then commune with the deeper nature of our being and feel our companionship with God.

It may be that our diet is not correct for our personal needs, and this results in an imbalance in our system which influences mental and emotional states. It may be we are overstressed because we are unhappy on the job or unhappy at home, and we do not know what to do to clear conditions and make them harmonious and satisfactory. It

may be that we are depending too much upon relationships to cause an inner response we term fulfillment. It may be that we are just too preoccupied with ourselves, having fallen into the habit of being self-centered. Soul-centeredness is the ideal; to be preoccupied with our personal characteristics and psychological processes can be spiritually deadening.

We have heard friends tell an associate who was in a rut, "You just don't have enough work to do to keep you busy!" Sometimes this is true. Sometimes we do not have enough useful work before us to challenge and command our attention and abilities. This is why we recommend a goal-oriented life: useful things to do that bring forth the best that is in us. Not just "something to do," but useful projects which demand the best of our creative talents and which enable us to know and feel that we are making some worthwhile contribution to the world's need. Functional people, people who are involved in creative pursuits, are usually happier and healthier people. Or haven't you noticed?

Living From the True Center

While working through the mind and emotional nature, there is, of course, the necessity of seeing to ideal conditioning of the subconscious level of the mind. But we should not be content to live out of the conditionings as a programmed being. This would make us robots. We accept conditionings as a convenience; we have certain habits and routine subconscious responses that enable us to relate to our world without the burden of intentional thought. We can bathe, dress, and perform routine tasks while inwardly planning our day, for instance. Living from the true center means to be inwardly aware, always, of our nature as a spiritual being and to make wise use of all available characteristics of mind and body to fulfill our just purposes.

Regular meditation is the basis for living a centered life. When we rest in conscious meditation we are inwardly

free. After meditation we can remain centered and objective even while performing our duties. We are not "other worldly" while doing this; we are inwardly settled in understanding. Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when he said he had overcome the world. He had become established in the understanding of his true nature and his relationship with God, so that he was no longer tempted, challenged or confused by any appearance the world could present to him. This is the ideal before us all. We are advised by all master teachers to move from a consciousness of restriction and outer dependence into an understanding of soul freedom and a conscious working relationship with God. In this new understanding we have never-changing peace. Our heart (feeling nature) is not troubled, neither is it afraid.

I received a letter from a man some time ago, and he said he had a problem. He practiced spiritual disciplines during the day and spent his evenings with his "buddies" talking and drinking beer. He wondered why he was confused and why progress he expected was not forthcoming. I can only assume it was because he was trying to live in two dramatically different worlds. On the one hand he was attempting to be free from the pull of the senses and avoid (during his practices) the confusion of the mind due to outer lack of concern with soul matters, while later in the day finding a degree of enjoyment by associating with friends who were not at all interested in soul matters. There is no way a person is going to be successful in spiritual practices if one does not follow through the rest of the time and select associations which are compatible with the spiritual intention. There are many wonderful people in this world who, at this time, have no conscious direction regarding soul-realization. They have their place in the scheme of things. There is no judgment. But if we spend too much time with people who are misdirected (or have no direction) or who are caught up in the restless surge of sense experience only, we tend to become involved in their interests and in their state of consciousness. There is no

reason, of course, why we cannot enjoy social intercourse with compatible friends and family members.

I frequently see sincere people who come here to Lakemont, for the purpose of retreat, who bring their restlessness with them. After a few days in this secluded, quiet environment, they begin to plan activities which will allow an outlet for their sense needs or their needs to be busy. They may talk too much, socialize too much, slip into apathy or dramatize their loneliness. A retreat away from accustomed environmental conditions can be useful if it offers nothing more than the opportunity for us to see just how centered and inwardly at peace we are without our usual sense input.

I have learned, through experience, to be alone when there was the opportunity to be alone or when conditions resulted in a time of being alone. From this I have derived strength and inner peace. I have also learned to participate fully in group activities and to be fully involved in useful creative endeavor. My lifestyle is not yours, but I find that I remain centered and "together" when I am intentional in what I do. That is, I plan my days and my weeks, and I select my associates. I either plan my social activities, or I accept whatever invitations seem useful. When I sometimes get caught in a social situation because of lack of judgment . . . a situation which seems not useful . . . I remain patient and mark if off to experience. (The next time, in a similar situation, I will know how to read the signals and avoid getting trapped.)

How Purposeful Are We?

What direction is our life taking? Is it all right with us? Or are we being carried along by the currents and being led along by the decisions of others even when we would prefer not to be so led? What does our guidance tell us? What does our common sense tell us? What does our heart tell us? Unto what do we aspire? If we had total freedom to follow the dictates of inner guidance, what would we do

with our life? (The fact is we do have total freedom; now what are we going to do about it?)

Does our life have a plan and a purpose? Or are we moving from the cradle to the grave without being truly conscious? Many people live out their entire incarnation in a mechanical manner, seeing to body needs and little more. What is the reason for even being partially conscious if we are going to be content with mere survival? All creatures survive throughout the span of their allotted biologcal clock-time. But we are more than creatures; we are as gods! We have come with a special purpose! We have come to acquire understanding, to be fully conscious, and to do God's will on earth.

If we "use" metaphysical principles merely to improve the quality of our lives, this can be an initial step. Beyond this is the step into soul consciousness and then to cosmic consciousness. The invitation to come into an understanding of the Divine life is always a standing one. What shall we say in response to this invitation to live consciously in the Kingdom? When we are inwardly secure in the knowledge of soul and God, we find an automatic adjustment and change for the better on mental, emotional, physical and environmental levels. This is because soul consciousness is superior to mind, emotions and outer events. This is why we are encouraged to seek first the Kingdom of God and God's right action.

As the observer of all that happens about me I am centered and stable in understanding. God is involved and God observes. I am involved and I observe.

"Let God use your mind,
your hands and all of
your talents and
natural abilities."
- Paramahansa Yogananda

Chapter 3

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?

The question here asked is posed for the express purpose of causing us to pause and take stock of our lives. All we have lived through so far is but a memory, what we are today experiencing is real, but just what are we to do with the rest of our time on earth? Have we thought about it? Are we preparing for it? Do we have definite plans for our experience in the future?

I know, we live forever. We came from inner space and "emerged" into this world-dimension. We will, sometime, withdraw from this world and continue our experience in subtle realms. This is the way it is for souls. But haven't we all thought of living up to our true potential? Haven't we dreamed, at least, of how life should be and could be? Haven't we thought of the contribution we should be making to our world? We are not alone here, you know. We are not here merely to pass through time and space with seldom a conscious thought. We are here to glorify God! This is what the masters have taught, teach now and will forever teach. We are here to be God's viewpoint in the world, and our mind and body is designed for the full expression of God. This is what sets us apart from the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. The plant king-

dom has its function, the animal kingdom has its function, and we have our unique function. Through our mind and through our nervous system the full radiance of the soul can shine and express, if everything is as it should be. So let's think about it sincerely: "What am I going to do with the rest of my life on earth?"

Evolution has been unfolding for billions of years on planet Earth. Evolution is the result of the emergence of Consciousness through the various life forms. Involution was the result of creative energy flowing into form and of Life being infused in matter. We are from "above"; that is, we came into involvement with matter when the evolutionary pattern afforded us the opportunity to identify with mind and body and to begin to serve our purpose.

Are we glorifying God or are we just making do, getting by or "working at it"? Each of us knows the answer to this question. Are we harboring rigid thoughts and holding onto limiting concepts? Do we justify our seeming inability to function as Life-giving spirits, made in the image and likeness of God? There are some people who seem to be content to get an education, marry and raise children, and hold a decent job. This is the extent of their ideal for this life. Survival, security, and companionship seems to be all some people can hope for or imagine for themselves. Survival is important, to be sure, and so is security, and, let's face it, companionship has its rewards. But, surviving as a body, being secure as a body, and being comfortable with companions is only the surface of life. Any reasonably aware person should be conscious enough and educated enough to see to personal security and satisfying relationships. Then what? What else should we aspire to? Well, it depends upon how conscious we are and what our soul destiny happens to be. One of the greatest contributions we can make to our world is to live an ideal life with total awareness. We can move in the mainstream of society and outwardly appear to fit in, and we will, but while doing this we can be conscious beings. We can be enlightened beings. As we live out of soul awareness we

contribute to the awakening of other people, because we are all attuned to a level of consciousness known as human consciousness. The collective unconscious (the sum total of all human consciousness) is also awakening, and this results in the ascent of civilization. The outer human environment is a reflection of the state of consciousness of all people. When we awaken and become truly conscious, this means that there is one less person in the world who is unaware. Collective human consciousness is cleared and society becomes healthier to the degree that individuals who make up society become clear and healthy. True health is soul-realization. One who is not soul-realized may be functional, but such a person is not really and completely healthy. I would like to see each person who reads this article respond to the challenge and make a firm decision, right now, to be enlightened or soul-realized. Wouldn't it be fine if every reader experienced soul awakening and became a conscious responsible member of the human community?

What Are We Going to Do When We Become Conscious?

Many who read this article are still working at becoming more aware. This is understandable, because we all had to go through this phase. But I do not feel we should think in terms of the enlightenment process having to take many decades (or lifetimes) to be experienced. Let your imagination soar and, in your daydreams, imagine how it would be if you were enlightened. Imagine how it would be if you were now expressing the light and the power of God in your daily life. What would you do if you were a liberated soul? What contribution would you make to the world and to your brother and sister souls?

Here is an idea: why not begin today to think, feel, and act as you would think, feel, and act if you were enlightened? Why not live from the point of view of, "I am a free spirit," instead of from the attitude, "One of these

days I'll be the person I am destined to be"? We might say, "I don't know how a conscious person thinks, feels, and behaves!" But, we do know, for we can read about enlightened people in the scriptures and biographies of the world. If need be, to start with, we can model ourselves after one of our spiritual heros. When we are conscious we will not be a copy of another person who is conscious, but there will be similarities in outlook, experience, and behavior.

Have We Seen to Our Own Enlightenment, and Are We Possessed of Understanding?

Some who think they are enlightened are still victims of erroneous thinking. A man recently told me of his involvement in many occult activities, many of which were strange and offbeat, and then said to me, "Isn't it wonderful that you and I are really involved in the same thing and that we see eye to eye?" This person made the mistake of assuming that to be open-minded and gullible was the same as possessing understanding. This is common today, as so many people read the great variety of books and publications on the market which are featured as "new age," but are really the results of clouded thinking. To be enlightened is to be clear and possessed of understanding. To be liberated is to be soul-realized. Have we seen to our own enlightenment, and are we truly possessed of understanding? If we are not possessed of understanding, how can we help others? Even Jesus made reference to those who were blind (lacking in understanding), who were teaching others who were similarly blind. Let us first see to our own understanding, then we will know how to effectively work with others who are seeking the truth. We are not talking about being possessed of understanding at the expense of others or being self-centered. We are talking about being possessed of understanding *and* then sharing with others. Let us see to spiritual health, mental and emotional health, health in relationships, physical health, and economic health. In this manner we will experience our full potential

and give to others the greatest gift of all, the fullness of the power and glory of God in expression.

Have We Made Peace With Others and With Our Present World?

There are reports of personal healing having taken place as the result of a suffering person learning to make peace with others and with the world. When there is strife, when there is confusion in communication, when there is frustration because of conflict and environmental pressure, we are sure to suffer mentally, emotionally, and physically. The first step in the direction of making peace with others and our world is to begin to know: "I am now in my right place in life. I am at peace within, I am at peace with all people, and I am at peace with my world and all that is in my world." When we are on friendly terms with a harmonious universe, we flow through life. To be natural is to be in harmony with nature. To be in harmony with nature is the way of the enlightened ones. When we flow with life, with understanding, then we live by grace, because the activity of the Holy Spirit (the intelligent influence of God that works in and through nature) supports and directs us always. If we need to forgive another, let us do it. If we need to forgive ourselves, let us do it. Whatever needs to be corrected, let us see to right action and harmonious relationships. We can use common sense, we can improve our communication, we can even pray our way through to freedom. The innate guidance of the soul will direct us if we are open and responsive.

Are We As Healthy, Efficient, and Successful as We Can Be?

Health is natural to one who is conscious and attentive to natural laws of living. We can learn to be efficient and we can learn to make wise use of time, energy, and actions. We can learn to establish our priorities and do first things

first. We can learn to cut out non-essentials. Many people are not successful because they waste so much of their energy. They work hard enough; they are just misdirected. Often our timing is off. We push too hard at the wrong time, or we do not act when we should act; we procrastinate perhaps. Sometimes we need further education. We mean well but we do not know how to do well. In this instance, we can acquire the education we need in order to do the things we want to do. We can have good intentions, but, if we do not know how to use our talents and abilities, we will not be successful.

What would we do if we had all the money we needed, if we were possessed of total health and understanding, if we were free to do whatever useful thing we were inspired to do? To take matters out of the abstract spaces of the mind, why not sit down with a personal notebook and do some possibility-thinking? Write down the ideas as they emerge to the conscious level of mind. Not all ideas will be presently practical, but write them down just the same. Is there a problem? What would be the solution? Write it down. Is there a need? How can this need be met? Write it down. Is there something you should be doing with your life that you are not doing? Write it down. Is there something you are doing (thinking or feeling) that is not useful or constructive? Write it down. Are there things you should do to reach your goals? Write your plan of action. I am forever making notes to myself. When I have a creative idea, I sit down and outline a plan or a project. I amend the plan or project, if need be, but at least I write it down so I can examine it further. If the project feels right, I either get into positive action or I open myself to accept it as a present possibility. We must be able to inwardly accept a possibility before it can manifest in our experience. Sometimes we say, "I wish I had a nice relationship. Or I wish I could do so and so." But what are we doing to make it possible? Are we open to the experience? Can we handle the responsibility of the experience? We can experience anything we can be responsible for; this is the law of

consciousness. Let us know this: "From this moment on, I am responsible for all that I experience!" Notice how good you feel when you move into the state of consciousness where you take responsibility.

One Thing is Built Into the Fabric of Nature . . . Change

Change is built into the world process. No relationship, no situation, no event is permanent. Change is as certain as the rising and the setting of the sun and moon. Change is as certain as breathing. If we remain static, it is because we are static in our thinking. We can learn to flow by daring to participate in the life process. One thing is required of us if we would be conscious, and this is courage. I do not refer to being foolhardy and reckless, but to being fearless in our relationships. What have we come to do in this world. Do we have a sense of destiny? This is God's way of informing us that we are important to the evolutionary process. That which inspires us also provides for us when we are open, responsive, and prepared to take on the responsibility. How much responsibility can we handle? How prepared are we to participate in the game of total living? These are useful questions, because self-examination is always useful.

A person who experiences health may someday experience disease. A person who experiences disease may someday experience health. In human (conditioned) consciousness, we can experience anything we can believe possible. When we are soul-realized, we always experience health, success, and open relationships. When we are soul-realized, we never again have to worry about problems. Soul-realization puts an end to all problems which were formerly possible for one in human consciousness. Remember the words of Jesus: "I have come that you might have life . . . and that you might have it more abundantly!" We are here to experience the full awareness of life. We are destined for spiritual freedom, and spiritual freedom insures freedom in this (or any other) world.

The great essential for spiritual freedom is the correct point of view, the correct understanding. What is the correct understanding in relationship to us? Here it is . . . . "We are Life-giving spirits, made in the image and likeness of God." This is the correct understanding. When we depart from this we have problems. When we are restored to this understanding, we are problem-free, our world is bright, and our vision is clear. We can work out one situation after another for the rest of this incarnation, or we can awaken and assume the correct understanding and put an end to problems forever. We will have challenge, but never a problem. We will have questions, but always there will be answers.

A Time to Be Involved and a Time to Withdraw With Ease

Since we came into this world we have business here. A wise person early in life finds out what his business is and gets on with it. My business is to be about God's business and to work with seekers who desire enlightenment. I knew this when I was small. Everything else has been but the unfoldment of the inner knowing. Yogananda came to be the prophet of Yoga in the West and to work with disciples with whom he had established a prior relationship. Einstein came to reveal to scientists the inner workings of matter. Some souls come to be doctors, others as teachers in the educational system, still others come to run the factories and handle the million and one needs in a planned human society. Taking the overview, isn't it remarkable that Life works through so many people in so many useful ways? The Oversoul, God, is working through all bodies and through all forms of matter. God knows what God is doing, and God is always totally conscious, totally omnipresent, and totally all-knowing. The energy of God appears as the things of the world, and the life of God animates bodies.

During this incarnation we have the opportunity to

become truly conscious (enlightened) and to fulfill our personal destiny. We were not born into this world as an accident of nature, to fill out our years with random and useless activity. Some people act as though they are just putting in time, waiting until death of the body. However, life does not end with transition; life continues. How prepared are we for the transition experience? In a practical vein, have we put our personal affairs in order? Have we decided upon the distribution of our worldly goods? Is everything arranged so that family and friends who must be responsible for the final handling of our estate or affairs can handle matters easily? If we are along in years or if we have an estate, have we made a will? If we have planned for the distribution of our worldly goods, have we done it wisely (as an extension of our service here), or have we done it out of sentiment and emotionalism? Most important of all, are we ready to leave this world without regret? Are we conscious enough to intelligently experience the next phase of living in subtle realms or realms of light? There is a reason why seers teach that living consciously is the best preparation for transition.

When the occasion for transition comes, do not fear. It is as natural as anything we have heretofore experienced. We came into this world, and most people have no memory of how it was with them prior to awakening to this world and this present body. But we came from somewhere and we are going somewhere. This is how it is when we flow with the universe. Life expressions are forever in the process of forever-becoming, forever-happening, forever-unfolding. If we live well while here, we will welcome transition. There is no death, there is only a change of viewpoint, a move from one relationship-experience to another. Those of you who have been close to transition know already how you became relaxed and open to it. There is a psychological adjustment that is experienced when transition is near. The soul knows the moment is near at hand, and one releases ties to this world and is open to what is to come.

While in this world, let us do our duty with a will and with intelligence. Let us fulfill our destiny and leave this world a better place. Let us do *now* what we plan to do sometime. God unfolding is resulting in a better world, and we have the chance to participate with this process. Haven't we all stood by and watched something wonderful happen and said: "I wish I had been part of that!"(?) Of course we have. Well, something wonderful is happening all the time, and we can be a part of it, if we are responsible and if we are willing to be creatively involved.

There are occasions of minor withdrawal also. These are the occasions of daily meditation and study. Each day we really should schedule a little time to be alone with ourselves and with God. It need not be a frantic time, it should be a quiet time of reflection and a time of being open to the wonder that is Life. This daily occasion will give us a stability and a strength that will see us through any condition the world has to present. This daily occasion will result in a deepening of our inner life and give us pause to examine what is truly important, as compared to that which is interesting but not essential. In the background of my mind I hear the ringing assertion of John in his epistle: "Beloved, I wish above all things that you might prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers." Isn't it good news to know that when we are spiritually prosperous, all things are automatically manifested in our personal experience? Isn't it good news to know that we have the choice as to whether we will remain in bondage to traditional thinking or whether we will accept liberation of consciousness? Here is the great opportunity, now before us! We can accept fulfillment and understanding, or we can give in to the pressure of the outside attitudes which so often cause us to get off the track in life.

I am now going to say it straight and clear! The truth about each one of us is that we are essentially free spirits. Any limitation is due to either lack of insight or lack of self-acceptance. There are needed disciplines and routines for many of us. The only purpose for such discipline

and/or routine is to get straight with life. The major thing to be done is to make the adjustment in attitude and learn to accept that which is true. We do not have to work everlastingly at becoming spiritual. Our essential nature is free already. This has to be understood and completely accepted.

Now that I am conscious I have real direction and purpose in my life. I live in tune with God and natural law, always. There is no mystery to life unfolding according to the evolutionary intent. How wonderful to see this!

"We are already perfect and self-complete. This has only to be consciously acknowledged."

Chapter 4

LIVING UP TO OUR FULL POTENTIAL

How many of us are truly living up to our full potential? How many of us are actually using the innate abilities that we have? Perhaps now is the time to clear mind and consciousness so that the natural ability of the soul can express in splendor and glory? Let us take this as our theme for this lesson. Then, let us take whatever steps are necessary to clear inner blockages and encourage the soul nature to come to the surface and take dominion in our lives.

We are Spiritual in Essence

This one thing we always remember: "We are spiritual in essence." We do not have to become confused and speak of high self, low self, other self, or of becoming spiritual. We are already as spiritual as we will ever be. We speak of levels (high, middle and low) when referring to the mind. We speak of superconscious mind, conscious mind and of the subconscious mind. These are levels of mind through which we, as spiritual beings, express. There are many strange philosophical views propounded today as a result of lack of understanding on the part of those who speculate. Only a materialist believes he is a mind or a body with a mind. We can be very clear on one thing–we are spiritual beings. We are as God is. God is the oversoul, the cosmic

soul; we are identified with mind and body in order to play out our chosen role in harmony with the activity of God.

One might say, "Yes, this sounds true enough . . . but how do I realize it?" The first step is simple acceptance without mental debate or evidence of inner doubt. We are conscious. We observe. We inwardly know we are indestructible, immortal beings. All the great masters teach this truth. Enlightened teachers do not teach falsely. They speak of what they know. Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you." (In the omnipresence of the oversoul there are many states of consciousness, but all are aspects of the One Consciousness, God.) The reason the average person does not consciously know the truth about his identity is that he has temporarily forgotten it. That which was forgotten can be recalled. This recollection is Self-realization. So, the first step is self-acceptance. As we learn to rest in the center of our being, we become more clear about our true identity. We awaken, sometimes slowly. Sometimes we awaken quickly. The secret is to work from a sense of *being.*

Some will say, "How can I know that God exists?" We have but to look around us and see the manifest world. The manifest world is the energy of God formed as the world. So God is all around us as all that we perceive in our immediate environment.

Let us not become confused and accept strange theories. Some teach that man has no soul but that the soul (essence) is developed over a period of time as a result of discipline, training and experience. But this is not the teaching of the masters. The masters teach that we came from realms of light and identified with the world. The subtle light realms (inner space) is our true home. We can be aware of this when we meditate, and we can be aware of this when we use our intelligence (faculty of discrimination).

I feel it to be useful for a person to be involved in any

discipline which clears mind and consciousness. However, we do not have to spend years involved in one system after another in a vague quest for an unknown something. Just the other day I received a letter from a person I had met seventeen years ago. Prior to our meeting, this person had been a Unity student, and her husband had been active in the Christian Science church. The basic teaching of the nature of consciousness was available to them in their respective teaching centers. But, out of restlessness, they became interested in UFOs. No problem, so far, as it is natural for one to wonder about such phenomena. Then they studied with me and learned to meditate. Then they began to attend seances and felt themselves to be in touch with "ascended masters" and pilots of flying saucers. They called their involvement "research." The husband died a few years ago, and his wife, recently seeing one of our advertisements in a national publication, renewed contact by mail. She informed me that she was presently involved with UFO research, *est* and the "born again Christian movement." An interesting mixture! (*est* is a fast growing movement involving intensive self-confrontation and can be useful for some people.) The interesting thing to me is that this person has been retired for years and has adequate income. Why she is still questing instead of working from the basics and being involved in an enlightenment activity I do not know.

Being Clear

When the mind is clear of confusion and we are emotionally balanced, the soul nature can easily shine. When we know we are spiritual beings working through a well-ordered mind, in harmony with our world, we are clear. Being consciously clear is the same as being enlightened and the same as the *samadhi* experience. *Samadhi* is a Sanskrit word which means the state of consciousness experienced when there is not any inner sense of duality. When we consciously acknowledge One Thing, this is

samadhi. It is error to think that *samadhi* is a state or condition of trance during which we are oblivious to mind or sense-perceived things. One may, during meditation, experience the transcendental aspect of consciousness and, for a time, not be aware of mind or the environment. But this is *samadhi* without mental identification. Permanent *samadhi* is the clear, conscious experience of oneness, even when we are involved in moment to moment activities and perceptions. When we experience that there is but one manifesting consciousness, this is *samadhi*. We do not "go into" *samadhi. Samadhi* is our natural soul condition. When deluded, we "go into" . . . or identify with mind and the conditionings of the mind. Even so, at a deeper level the soul's natural condition is *samadhi*. One is not incapacitated during conscious *samadhi*. Nor does one channel messages during conscious *samadhi*. Conscious *samadhi* is the experience of clear soul awareness.

How clear are we? Are we still victimized by thoughts and feelings which originated in the past? Does memory interfere with conscious awareness? Do we still entertain doubts, fears, anxieties, regrets and a load of guilt? One who is clear lives out of the moment and is not controlled by patterns in the mind or body. One who is clear easily handles memory, feelings and relationships. We know how clear we are by how we handle memories, feelings and relationships. It is quite easy, through self-observation, to tell how we are doing and what we need to do yet to clear mind and consciousness.

According to individual destiny a clear person will either be quietly undramatic or will be outwardly dynamic in the expression of soul abilities. It is natural for a clear person to be intuitive, to be able to know what is happening, and to be able to know what will probably occur in the near or distant future. The future is not "set" absolutely, but there are certain causes which can be observed which, if not modified, will result in known effects. By examining our present state of consciousness, or present attitude and our manner of behavior, we can predict our

own future. By changing, if need be, our outlook on life and our mental attitude, we can alter the present sequence of events. We can decide anew each day which way we will go in life. We can choose optimism or we can accept gloom. We can choose peace of mind or we can accept fear and confusion. We can choose happiness or we can accept gloom. The choice is ever ours.

Even if conditions presently appear impossible, conditions can be changed when we change our attitude. Emerson said it quite well: "The world is plastic and fluid in the hands of God." Change is built into the world condition. Relationships can be healthy. We can prosper. We can be in health. If there is a present problem, no matter what it seems to be, there is a solution. The Intelligence which runs the universe will cooperate with us when we learn to cooperate with It. What the world calls miracles are occurring every moment right where we are when we have eyes to see.

We have all thought of a person we have not seen for a long time and had that person contact us almost immediately. We have all "wished" for an experience and, before long, seen matters unfold to make the experience possible. Wishing, gentle picturing, gentle visualizing: this is how the soul is able to call forth events and experiences in cooperation with Universal Mind. We have said it before,"There is one mind common to all men." This is the mind of God, and this mind is everywhere present—and everywhere conscious—and everywhere expressive—and everywhere responsive. This is why the master teachers tell us: "Only believe."

Whatever we can inwardly picture and accept (believe), as long as the event is possible in accord with natural law, we can experience. I am suggesting that we use this natural principle in everyday life. I am not suggesting that we try to influence others to do our bidding or that we try to prove to others how amazing are our powers. Just the natural expression of soul awareness, in line with personal destiny, is all I am suggesting.

Try it with health, if you like. See yourself healthy and fully functional; then follow your guidance relative to diet, exercise and whatever else you feel led to do. But consciousness is superior and will reflect through mind to body and then into actions. Without the consciousness of health (the total acceptance of health), we will be forever working at trying to cause health, instead of working from the inside out.

Try it with relationships. Within yourself know you are an all right person. Have total self-acceptance. Know that you deserve mature relationships because this is natural. Feel confident and self-fulfilled. Then, be fair and open with others. See how relationships improve. See how fulfillment in the outer is reflected from inner self-acceptance.

Try it with prosperity. Within yourself know that Consciousness is the only thing there is and that life unfolds in perfect proportion to meet you at your level of acceptance. If you can accept prosperity you can experience it; then a wage situation, taxes, work conditions and whatever else is used as an excuse (and believed in by many) will have no power over you. Some people tell me they never have enough money or they never have enough of any needed thing. What we affirm is what we experience. If we affirm: "Money is tight, things are scarce, hard times are coming"—this will be our experience. Why, in a world of abundance in a modern society, are some people prosperous and so many lacking money, things, opportunity or whatever is claimed? Is it because the rich exploit the poor? Is it because there isn't enough to go around? People are impoverished because they are spiritually impoverished. Is there any lack in the ocean of Universal Mind? Are there any limits to Consciousness? Of course not! It must be a matter, then, of the individual's attitude and state of consciousness. When the windows of the mind are opened and we see clearly, we automatically experience prosperity and fulfillment.

A time-tested principle is this: if we want to have, we

must learn to accept and we must learn to be a channel through which life gives to itself. We are life-giving spirits; life flows out from us when we let it. This flow of life is evidence of prosperity. In some teaching circles it is taught that as we give, so we receive. This principle works according to our belief and according to our level of acceptance. Many, however, seem to give and give and still remain impoverished and unfulfilled. Some will say, "I give and give but nobody appreciates it!" Or "I give, when is it going to come back to me?" The moment we express life, in that moment we are expressing prosperity and manifesting the reality of the soul. That is the moment of blessing. Giving money to a useful cause, lending a helping hand to another, making a positive contribution to our world—these are ways we express our realization. It is a mistake, evidence of spiritual limitation, when we affirm that we will give of ourselves and of our substance after we get our lives settled and all together. When we actually schedule a percentage of our time, energy, wisdom and substance with the idea of giving and sharing, we open the mind and blessings flow. One reason for this is that when we open ourselves, we get clear of mental conditionings, and the intelligence of the soul, which is identical to the intelligence of God, begins to express itself. Also, when we are open and life-giving, we find ourselves working in harmony with the very life of God, and this results in an expansion of awareness. When we take God into partnership with whatever venture in which we are presently involved, we begin to experience the rich full life we were destined to experience. One person said: "My experience is that the more I give wisely of myself, the more I have to give. And working with God is just plain fun! It feels good!"

Ever More Subtle Levels

In the "many mansions" of Consciousness there are subtle spaces yet to be discovered by the average person. I find it amusing to notice some researchers going to see

Satya Sai Baba, for instance, and trying to figure out how he is able to materialize things in an instant by an act of gentle will. No effort is involved, no long bouts of concentration—just simple will. It does boggle the average mind (which is not used to seeing such happenings) when Sai Baba stirs the air with his hand and produces a large rosary, or a ring, or a handful of candy, or perhaps medicine for a student in need of healing. I have seen him do these things, as have millions of others. He was once asked how he was able to materialize things. He laughed and said, "I have self-confidence!" We are back to self-confidence again, because this is where true ability begins. There is no need for incantations, hocus-pocus, involved rituals or prayers of supplication. All that is required of us is self-confidence.

We can do anything (as long as we are in harmony with natural law) we can accept as possible. We can speak the word and heal. We can speak the word and bless. We can speak the word and be free. Yes, we can do any reasonable thing when we accept the simple premise that we can. Recall the words of Jesus: "If you have the faith as of a grain of mustard seed you can say unto this mountain, 'be removed and it will be removed.' " This doesn't imply small faith; it implies *innate reality* which has the power to influence.

Is it wrong to exercise soul ability? This is a frequent question. No, it is not wrong to exercise soul ability, as long as we are working from the level of clear awareness. No one thinks it wrong to use creative imagination or natural skills. Soul abilities are natural to us. Life through us can bless the world once we are open to the flow and always under guidance. The ideal attitude is to be surrendered to God's will, then to express according to inner guidance.

A Practical Daily Routine

The most useful routine we can have in life is to make

a daily appointment with ourselves and spend quiet time in study, reflection and deep meditation. A few years ago, Dennis Weaver of TV fame, was interviewed for an article in *Guidepost* magazine. He explained that he always reserved at least thirty minutes twice a day for the purpose of meditation. He referred to this time as "The one hour a day that anchors my life." For those of you who do not know about Mr. Weaver's personal religious involvement: He is a lay minister in the Self-Realization Fellowship church in California and a disciple of our line of gurus. After meditation, rest quietly and contemplate your life and yourself in relationship with others. Inquire gently within, "God, what would you have me do this day to best represent you?"

Specific insight may not emerge to the surface of your conscious mind immediately after such self-inquiry, but, in time, as you go about your reasonable duties, you will notice certain guidance and certain opportunities being presented to you. The inner guidance of the soul is God's guidance in our lives.

Every area of my mind and every part of my body rejoices with a sense of freedom now that I am clear in understanding. There is no restriction at all as I flow through life as a free spirit.

"Self-discipline, study,
meditation and surrendering
the fruits of all actions
to God is Kriya Yoga."
- Yoga Sutras

Chapter 5

THE PHILOSOPHY AND LIGHT OF KRIYA YOGA

Sages teach that if we would be truly spiritually free we must be clear and aware, without mental impressions interfering with our perception. Without mental impressions (memory) the mind would not be functional, of course, but the ideal is to have a well ordered mind and to be inwardly aware of our nature as changeless spirit. So long as we are prevented, in any manner, from following the impulse of the soul nature (because of restricting mental impressions), we are in need of some form of discipline or yoga.

The purpose of all spiritual discipline is to cleanse the mind and allow freedom to the soul. The process is known as *Kriya Yoga. Kriya* (a Sanskrit term) refers to the purification process. In basic Hatha Yoga texts, body cleansing processes are known as *kriyas*; for instance, *neti kriya* means cleaning of the nasal areas and head cavities. Patanjali, in his famous treatise *The Yoga Sutras* (see our commentary, *This Is Reality*), in the first verse of the second section of the work, states: "Self-Discipline, study and surrendering all activities to God is Kriya Yoga."

Kriya Yoga, as a term, is known widely today because of the early and present influence of the teachings of Paramahansa Yogananda and the spread of his books. Mil-

lions of people all over the world have learned of Kriya Yoga as a result of reading his amazing book *Autobiography of a Yogi.* This book is now published in at least 13 major world languages. Yoganandaji shared in this book the teaching emphasis of Kriya Yoga and how this tradition was introduced to the world through his line of gurus: Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar and himself. Other teachers have more recently come to the West with a Kriya Yoga message.

What is often overlooked or not fully explained is that Kriya Yoga embraces more than just the meditation techniques as taught in the Raja Yoga system. Kriya Yoga includes everything we do to live the spiritual life. It is a philosophy as well as a practice, something to be examined as well as to be experienced.

Kriya Yoga Meditation Techniques

Instruction will vary from teacher to teacher, according to what the teacher has found to be useful in his own practice, as well as according to what the teacher feels is most useful for the student to learn. All enlightened teachers offer valid instruction geared to individual need. We do not all have the same temperament, capacity, or response to instruction. Our personal needs vary; this is why instruction varies. In some instances a teacher will offer precise instruction in specific meditation techniques. Yogananda always pointed out that techniques were "tools" and were not ends in themselves. In other instances a teacher will not be too specific relative to techniques, but he will encourage attunement with the guru, surrender to God, and love for mankind. Usually, however, we find a blending of all essential themes in a traditional Kriya Yoga teaching situation.

Yoganandaji, after initial instruction in philosophy and guidelines for natural living, taught a new student mantra meditation. He taught *Hong-Sau* mantra. One was advised to sit in a quiet place, pray to God, let the yearning of the

heart be evident, and observe the natural sequence of breathing while mentally *listening* to the sound of *Hong* with inhalation and *Sau* with exhalation. The attention, it was taught, should be directed to the third eye—not pushing to the third eye, but flowing to the third eye with an attitude of surrender. One can use any useful mantra in this manner. *So-Ham* mantra is traditional. There are others, also. Mantra gives the attention something to focus upon, it clears the mind, and in the long term it (through the effect of sound) purifies the nerves of the body.

After one had attained a degree of proficiency through mantra meditation, one was then taught how to listen to the internal sound of OM (Aum), the primal sound discernable to anyone who listens within. Along with this information, instruction was given on how to look more clearly into the third eye (spiritual eye) and to perceive the inner light of the third eye, crown chakra, and often the reflected light of the chakras. When one had shown advancement in this practice, Kriya Yoga pranayama was taught in an initiation setting. Prana refers to the vital force in the system. Pranayama means control and regulation of this vital force through the use of a certain technique. This technique is often thought to be the total Kriya Yoga system—but it is not; Kriya Yoga refers to the techniques as well as to philosophy and all that we do to allow the soul to experience freedom. This soul freedom is referred to as liberation and is the goal of all spiritual discipline.

Kriya Pranayama is a method used to draw vital force upward through the spinal pathway into the brain. This practice results in strong surges of creative energy (*Shakti*) felt throughout the system. Eventually, *kundalini* is awakened and begins its gradual ascent to the crown chakra. When this occurs our spiritual evolution is quickened and our salvation assured. There is no turning back from the certain goal (liberation) once this back-flowing aspect of the vital force becomes steady and constant. Kriya Yoga pranayama enables one to withdraw attention from the senses so that meditation becomes natural and spon-

taneous; it also results in the purification of the mental field, nervous system and physical body.

Our definition of *mental field* is that field of subtle matter in which impressions (memory) are contained and that through which embodied souls look through, into the world of matter. The soul, it is taught, in order to have communication with this dimension, must work through a mind and body. If perception is marred by mental patterns, then the soul cannot see clearly; it sees through the patterns of the mind, thus perception is distorted. Deep-seated impressions (*samskaras*) are referred to collectively as the karmic pattern of the individual. Karma is not of the soul, for nothing can cling to the soul; karma is of the mental field, the mind. Karma (impressions) sometimes extends into the feeling nature (part of the mind) and even into the body. When a strong mental-emotional reaction or cause is introduced in the direction of the body (through intense desire or strong reaction or pain), then a trace or impression is actually made upon the protoplasm of the cells of the body. These impressions can be transmitted to offspring. Kriya Yoga in all of its aspects cleans up karmic patterns. Impressions of the mind are neutralized, emotions are balanced, the body is cleansed and renewed, and the soul awareness becomes so clear that one understands one's real nature and the relationship to mind, emotions and body. It is true, as often declared, "I am not body, I am not mind, I am ever-free spirit." This insight comes to one on the Kriya Yoga path. Any purifying discipline is a Kriya Yoga path even if it is not so named. A dedicated Christian, who prays, does well by others, and surrenders his life to God is doing exactly what those of the Kriya Yoga tradition do. I feel it useful to understand the common thread and not become caught up in a sense of importance regarding terms, words, and cultural roots of a philosophy or system.

True initiation takes place when a person is correctly instructed in matters of philosophy and conduct, in precise meditation methods, and when the sleeping vital force is

quickened. Then one is not only educated but one is also born anew. Initiation is a "new beginning," an occasion to embark upon the most thrilling journey of all—that of exploring the reality of God and understanding the soul's relationship to God and nature.

The Philosophy of Kriya Yoga

The philosophical explanation of the nature of the universe is simple and almost anyone can grasp it once preconceived notions are put aside. It is taught that there is but one real Thing. Some refer to it as Life. Some refer to it as God. Some refer to it as Consciousness. It, not being restricted or limited, does not *care* what It is called. Out of the pure state flow the manifest worlds. The first expression is God, the Oversoul. In the Godhead are the three major aspects of Being, Awareness, and Creative Energy. The sound of outflowing creative energy is OM (Aum, Amen). The frequency of this energy is altered as it flows out and enables it to *become* the universe. Literally, the *word* is made flesh. The creative energy becomes a body (matter). Omnipresent intelligence (Christ Consciousness) directs the universal activity. Then, it is taught, particular expressions of the same pure consciousness become involved in the universal process, and these expressions are referred to as souls, units of awareness possessed of the same aspects and characteristics which are observed in the Godhead, the Oversoul. This is why it is taught that we are made in the image and likeness of God. This is why it is taught we are able to awaken to the conscious awareness of our true nature. This experience of conscious awareness is Self-realization. The true *self* is the soul. In the Kriya Yoga tradition we are asked to examine the nature of consciousness and arrive at true understanding.

Self-Discipline and Study

Kriya Yoga includes all that we do (or do not do)

which contributes to the awareness of the soul. Instruction is given relative to being harmless, fair, honest, in control of energy (as well as time spent at work and activity), self-analysis, and intelligent investigation into the meaning and purpose of life. This is all included in Kriya Yoga.

Study refers to self-examination and to the examining of how and why the universe *is as it is*. The universe *is as it is* because this is *how it is*. We can elect to project our own wishes upon life as a process and create a personal philosophy with which we can live (within the framework of our concepts), or we can elect to *look* and *see what is*. Being able to look and see clearly is Jnana Yoga (the Yoga of discernment). This is included in the Kriya Yoga system. Kriya Yoga includes all of the traditional practices as well as whatever is needed by the individual in his quest for enlightenment.

Study also refers to examining the words, whether spoken or written, of conscious people. Conscious (aware) people share their understanding with us, and we can learn from them how it is to be free and inwardly clear (enlightened). This can be a guide to our private study and a guide for us relative to with whom we choose to relate. Does the book . . . does the teacher . . . represent the true message? If the study reference is not clear (or not endowed with insight) one is almost certain to fail on the path, because it is not possible for one to follow (associate with) a teaching or teacher and learn truly if the source is without clarity—unless as it may happen in rare instances, the seeker in such a relationship simply realizes the futility of the outer search and comes to the realization that the *truth* is already within. The *truth* is *that which is so* about any given subject or situation. The *truth* is not opinion or convenient belief; the *truth* is *that which is so. Truth* is not relative. Error and shadings of misunderstanding are relative. *Truth* is *that which is so.*

Surrendering All Activities to God

We are reminded that we are not alone in this universe.

We are in partnership with God in all that we do. Therefore, to surrender everything that we do to God is an intimate and direct involvement. We can surrender our work by working consciously at some useful project and by doing our duty with a bright and open mind. We can surrender our feelings to God by releasing guilt, frustration, resentment, and anger. We can surrender the mind by letting it become clear during meditation and during our quiet times . . . and by releasing negative and non-useful attitudes. With sweet surrender, the ego (sense of being apart from God) dissolves and true knowledge is experienced. Surrendering all activities to God need not mean that we are overtly involved in religious activities. How about attention to duties and reponsibilities with a positive and fair attitude? This is surrender, this is getting back to what is natural and essential. How about just being fair with people and treating them with respect? This is a natural and essential thing to do. How about surrendering all of our ideas and attitudes which limit and restrict the natural expression of the soul? This is the most important of all, because then all else will unfold in perfect proportion.

Facing Life with Courage

Facing life with courage is part of Kriya Yoga. There can be no success on the spiritual path if we are self-restricted and working from an attitude of being weak, fearful, inept and confused, with an attitude of, "Please let me slink through life without too much observation or communication." Self-realized people are strong, self-confident, bold when they have to be bold . . . but never pushy or domineering. Self-realized people trust in God, and they handle their memories, feelings, and actions in space and time.

How responsible are we as far as fulfilling our obligations? How responsible are we as far as being in open communication with others? How responsible are we for handling our lives and doing what we know we ought to do?

Right here, in our present world, is the training field (some call it the battle ground, but it really isn't) and the opportunity to test ourselves and see if we have our lives together. The world is consciousness-appearing-*as*. We are intelligent units of awareness, and we should be able to function in this world and handle ourselves in relationship to time, what goes on in space, and what occurs during relationships.

Past-Time, Present-Time, Future-Time

Past and present time are linked because of memories of events past and events of the moment. Are we living in present-time while handling memories of times-past? What is past is past, except for the memory. What was done has already been done, except for our emotional reaction to how we behaved or performed. If we are emotionally bound to the past, we are slaves to memory instead of being free in the moment. This may have to be handled. If we are "all right" in the moment but fearful of the future, we injure ourselves because of anxiety and tension related to fear of the future. The future is assured because God is in command. There is nothing to fear. Disaster cannot happen to a person who is anchored in the awareness of God. No harm can come to one who is at peace within himself. A key to personal freedom is to live in the moment, handle memories of past events and experiences, and be relaxed and optimistic about the future.

To live in present-time . . . have something useful to do, have experiences to pleasantly anticipate (without living mentally in the future) and relax into God, always. Have a short time each day for private time . . . to study, contemplate, meditate . . . even to be alone while walking, running, or playing whatever game is fun. Be attuned to the present and let the inner mind soar to cosmic areas.

We are already liberated at the soul awareness level. What many have to work out is the mental-emotional-body limitations. Kriya Yoga (the process of purification) is a

way to clear mental-emotional-body limitations. Kriya Yoga pranayama (which many of you already know . . . but are you practicing?) is a basic and powerful cleanser of the system. Meditation, however, is only practiced for a short period daily; the major portion of our time is given to work, play, rest, leisure-time activities. How do we handle the mental attitude and emotional nature during this major portion of our time? This is where Kriya Yoga really comes in. This is where our total attention is required. The ideal is to be fully conscious, fully aware, fully functional, at all times.

Are we doing what we know we should do, always? (Don't feel guilty; few of us are this much in self-command.) Do we eat correctly, work consciously, rest sufficiently, deal fairly with friends and associates, exercise to meet our needs, refrain from judgment of others, handle our memories and emotions, plan wisely for the future (without strain), and follow through on decided-upon programs of action? Do we truly love? Are we always "there" when others need us for support, encouragement and positive example? If so, we are into Kriya Yoga; if not, we are in need of improvement in some areas of thought, feeling and behavior. There is never a lasting problem, however,— with God, all things are possible.

Everything I do is Kriya Yoga because everything I do is God-tuned. Working, thinking, praying, relating . . . all that I do is involved with God's activity and movement in and as this world.

"Few mortals know that
the kingdom of heaven
extends fully to this
earth plane."
- Mahavatar Babaji

Chapter 6

LIVING FROM THE HIGHEST POINT OF VIEW

Have you ever noticed (haven't we all?) that there are some days when the world looks clear and bright, and there are some days when the world is obviously the same, but we see it as though through a clouded mind? This is exactly what happens. We have occasions of clear perception, when we see the wonderful order in life, and we have had times of falling back into identification with mental and emotional patterns, and this causes us to see through our mental and emotional distortions. We are the same. The world is the same. It is just that through identification with mental patterns and unresolved emotional patterns the soul sometimes is restricted in perception.

The First Thing to Remember: We Are Ever the Same

The soul is ever untouched by that with which it identifies. The soul is ever free and is not subject to change. Swami Muktananda of India once gave a talk to a group in San Francisco. The title was, "Getting Rid of What You Haven't Got." He spoke from the plane of pure insight and clearly explained that the soul does not own the mental conditionings. Yet, while identified with the conditionings, it seems as though there is something to get rid of. This is the age-old problem. We find Krishna trying to explain this fact to Arjuna in the opening chapters of the *Bhagavad-Gita.* Arjuna plays the role of the tradition-bound personality and is resisting his own good by arguing

with his mentor. Finally, as the book continues, we find Arjuna's mind cleared and right understanding prevails. The whole dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna is the conversation which takes place between the enlightened soul nature and the conditioned mind. This is why the *Gita* has universal appeal; we can all see ourselves in the drama. We have all thought, "I know better than I do!" We have all thought, "I can do better than the person I am portraying!" We know this because we are inwardly aware of our soul nature, in contrast to the tricks of the mind and the play of emotions.

We came into this world and learned to adapt to it. We came from somewhere and we are going somewhere. We are just "passing through" this world drama. We are only here for a little while. What are we doing with our time and opportunity? What are we doing with the few decades allotted to us in this incarnation? We should ponder these questions.

Are We Flowing With the Power or Are We the Effects of Past Causes?

Chinese philosophers taught that freedom was to be experienced as a result of flowing with the natural order. Really, all masters have taught this; we are to be conscious and learn to flow with nature's pattern. We are born into this world, we mature, we participate, we withdraw and we make our transition. This is the way of the natural order of things in this world. Birth to this world is not "good" and transition is not "bad." This is the way of nature. We know nature's laws. We know about fresh air, natural food, healthy relationships and the need for rest between cycles of activity. If we flow with the Intelligent Power that runs the universe, we cannot fail to experience soul satisfaction.

Some ask, "How do I do it? I try so hard!" Diligence is required, but effort is inconsistent with nature's flow. Impatience and working too hard to succeed, without having insight and knowledge, is a dead end. The result is

frustration. I receive occasional letters from people who are trying sincerely to help their world and they cannot even help themselves. They mean well and I understand this. But they frequently have not yet matured in understanding, and they have not yet learned just how to proceed with their life's mission. Unless we are born with knowledge or have had the appropriate education, it may take time, as this world knows time, to acquire the skills and experience which will enable us to flow with life.

Often we repeat the same mistakes time and time again. Life experience is never exactly the same even if circumstances seem similar . . . but the pattern tends to be duplicated over and over again until we awaken and learn to live from a new point of view. Some will assert, "I always make the same mistake in judgment!" Or, "I can never say 'no' even when I know I should." Also, "Why does this sort of thing always happen to me, time and time again?" We repeat mistakes, duplicate patterns and experience similar happenings because our consciousness and mental attitude is "frozen" and consistent. We always see in our environment that which reflects from our state of consciousness, and our state of consciousness (unless we are clear) is conditioned by mental attitude, opinions, beliefs and a restricted point of view about life.

1. *Opinions*–We draw our own conclusions about what is so about life, and these are our opinions. Seeing clearly *that which is so* is soul perception and not opinion. A conclusion drawn from appearances is a personal opinion. We have a right to personal opinions, but these are not clear perceptions. Opinions are subject to change, if we are mentally flexible enough to accept this possibility. If we are defensive about our opinions, this is a sign of insecurity; we know we are probably wrong, but we are afraid to accept the possibility.

2. *Mental Attitude*–How do we look at life? Are we positive or are we negative in our outlook? Are we possessed of a healthy self-image? Do we like ourselves? Are we OK? Are others OK? Is life an adventure and a marvelous

opportunity to experience and learn . . . or is life a bore, something which we must handle on a dull day to day basis? Do we enjoy the moment and anticipate the near and distant future? Are we afraid? Are we insecure? Just what is our usual mental attitude?

3. *Beliefs*—Do we assert,"This is what I believe and my mind cannot be changed?" Or do we possess an inner knowing which results in certainty and allows for the fact that others may not share our views? Many religious people are narrow-minded and bigoted . . . or haven't you noticed? Narrow-mindedness also extends to the metaphysical field . . . or haven't you noticed? Until we wake up and become conscious, we tend to take our conditionings and habit patterns with us. This is human nature.

4. *Restricted Point of View*—Do we say, "I see things this way because this is the way I was taught as I grew up?" Yes, we do tend to be influenced by our learning experience. We do, often, tend to feel that older and "wiser" people know more than we do. This is sometimes true and this is sometimes false. It is up to us to learn to discern the difference between that which is true and that which is false, without blaming those who taught us out of their then-present understanding. Many people are restricted in life because of early training. They may have been taught that money is the root of all evil, sex is bad, life is suffering, man is born in sin, and/or we have no right to want to know too much.

I presume that no reader of these lessons will blame karma for any present problem. Karma refers to the subconscious impressions which presently restrict . . . and everyone has some restricting mental impressions. We can, however, learn to work with them and gradually erase them or rise free of them. We must never take a defeatist attitude and affirm that we can do nothing about our conditionings. An immortal spirit, with innate power and ability, should never give in and accept that mental and emotional conditionings have permanent restricting influence. Never! Conditionings can be cleared, the mind can be

enlightened, the body can be repaired and renewed, if need be! All things (in the natural world) are possible! *Soul is superior to mind and mind is superior to body*. Let us never forget this simple truth. *Soul is superior to mind and mind is superior to body*. God is superior to Universal Mind, and God through Universal Mind is the controlling and regulating influence of the world process. Even when we do not understand the evolutionary process, with rapid changes about us, there is that Intelligence of God which knows what is best for the total picture. It does not care about human (mind identified) fancy; It is only concerned with the Grand Plan. It is up to us, it seems to me, to learn to cooperate with God's will.

It does not matter what we have done in the past. It does not matter if we have been unwise, impure in motive and behavior, or just plain unaware. All this can be cleaned up in a moment once we come into our soul understanding and accept the here and now reality of God doing what God does. Moving in the direction of God wipes out the past. It is like walking from the slum area to the modern and comfortable area of a city; it is only a matter of taking the right direction. When we walk from the slums we leave that consciousness behind. Others may prefer to remain there, or they may not know how easy it is to walk out of there. We can invite our friends and associates out of the slum-consciousness, but we do not have to remain in their consciousness if they refuse to move out for whatever reason.

There are various influences that act upon us: planetary emanations; other people's thoughts and feeling; world karma; and our own built-in biological cycles. We can always be centered; in soul awareness and anchored in God, and we do not have to overly respond to external influences, even though they are present. To say such influences do not exist is to be impractical . . . but to remain inwardly secure and centered is wisdom.

1. *Planetary Emanations*—All energies in nature interact. It is natural then for emanational energies of planets

to influence that to which they extend. These energies, not being intelligently directed, are neither good nor bad . . . that is, there is no conscious intention which sends them forth. The interaction of energies, however, can result in harmony or conflict because of the differences in frequency. Solar flares do have an influence upon the magnetic field of planet earth (and other planets in the solar system). On planet earth this sun activity often results in a disruption of radio communications. It is also known that the moon's reflected light has an influence on mental and emotional states of human beings. Many who read this lesson are interested in astrology. Reasonable people have researched astrological influences and found a useful correlation between certain planetary influences and specific happenings in the experience of people. A wise person will not be a fearful victim of planetary influences but will live from the soul-awareness level and flow in harmony with nature's energies. My experience is that one need not consult the horoscope in order to flow with life. If one is inwardly at peace and in tune with God then one naturally follows guidance and naturally responds to whatever life situation that emerges so that right action is the rule, always.

2. *Other People's Thoughts and Feelings*—We will all admit that it is sometimes easy to become caught up in the thoughts and feelings of people in our immediate environment, if we are not centered and clear. When our guard is down we tend to become like that which is predominate in our environment. However, we do not have to be unwillingly influenced by thoughts and feelings expressed by others. Sometimes a person will say, "If you'd be happy, I'd be happy." Perhaps if we would be happy the other person would be brought into our happy frame of mind! Perhaps if we were centered and at peace others would become more settled and more at peace! Even thoughts and feelings expressed by others who are not in personal contact with us can sometimes influence us if we are emotionally attuned. There is no barrier to human com-

munication. There is but One Mind which is everywhere present and we all dwell in this One Mind. When attuned to the subconscious level of the One Mind we can experience telepathic communication regardless of the distance between us and others. We are to love and respect all people. We need not become caught up in the mental and emotional confusion of others. Nor do we have to be unwillingly influenced by the intentions of other people if our ideals differ from theirs. Many people lead mechanical lives. They move through the day as though in a mental fog. Such people are easily influenced, dominated and controlled by external intentions and the superior will of others. We should always know: "I am made in the image and likeness of God. I am God directed and God influenced in all that I do."

3. *World Karma*—Because of the interaction of millions of minds and the emotional states of masses of people, there is world karma and there is regional karma. For instance, according to the theory of grand cycles, our present Electrical Cycle is the time when one-fourth of the people on the planet are sufficiently awakened to aspire unto the ideal of God-knowledge and world harmony. In a few thousand years one-half of the world's population will be awakened and a few thousand years later the majority on the planet will be awakened. We are, therefore, living in a world in which the masses are more concerned with body needs than with soul needs. I want to emphasize that we can live consciously a life of personal fulfillment, with those with whom we are in tune, regardless of external conditions. But the trend of change on the world scene is slow because of the inertia which dulls human consciousness as a whole. Some areas of the world have more people who are soul conscious and some areas of the world have more people who are strictly materialistic. We can see the results reflected in the lifestyle of the people living in the respective regions of the world. We find this situation, on a small scale, in communities. We find, in the average community: a certain percentage of bright people; a certain

percentage of upward striving people; a certain percentage of confused and selfish people; and a certain percentage of people who are overcome with heaviness and who have given up, for the time being, and who do not even imagine a life situation other than that which they presently experience.

4. *Biological Cycles*—We all have days when we are intellectually discerning and days when we are not so sharp; days when we are physically vital and days when we are a little less energetic; and days when we are emotionally "up" and days when we are emotionally "down." Sometimes it is not external influences, but, internal influences that cause these alterations in energy, mental clarity and emotional stability. Again, when we have an "off" day, we can still remain centered and inwardly at peace, knowing that the situation is but a temporary one and will pass. We can use our more creative days to direct attention and energies towards useful goals and we can use our less creative days to reflect, be calm and observe the life process without judgment. We should also be alert to the fact that, at these quiet times, we should not judge ourselves. We should not, at these times, make major decisions or ponder past mistakes. We should not berate ourselves for being unable to remain always in top form. These are phases through which we may go but we can, inwardly, always acknowledge the truth of our own being.

The more clear and spiritually aware we are the less we will be influenced by external and internal conditions. We are not to do battle with any influence; we are to see through it and learn to rest in the highest point of view . . . "I am a Life-giving spirit, made in the image and likeness of God. Conditions change about me but I change not."

What Prevents Us From Accepting Fulfillment?

This is one of the most important matters to examine.

When we know we are divine and that we are welcome to fulfillment and all good, why do we not accept it? What restricts? Does anything external restrict? We can be happy merely by accepting the right to be happy. We can be at peace merely by learning to be at peace. We can be mentally clear merely by letting go of thinking habits and speaking habits which clutter the mind. We can be in health merely by observing the laws of nature and by inwardly accepting health as a natural condition. We can prosper (live a life of fulfillment) by accepting the "all-right-ness" of prosperity and by learning to do what needs to be done to allow the condition of prosperity to unfold in our lives. We cannot think, feel and act in the old way and expect a new way of life to outwardly express. One teacher reported that a student of his said, "I don't want to change. I just want things to get better!" The outer picture cannot change if the inner condition does not change, for the outer is a reflection of the inner. This is the law of mind and consciousness.

One of the inner restricting causes for lack of outer fulfillment is fear of communicating with our world, usually because we are not sure we can handle the responsibility of such communication. Another restricting cause for lack of outer fulfillment is the inner feeling (self-generated or acquired from another) that it is "not right" to be fulfilled. The reader would be surprised to know of many "truth" teachers who teach the way to the more fulfilled and prosperous life who, themselves, are unhealthy, not prosperous and not emotionally balanced or mentally settled. This is not judgement, merely an observation.

Some Useful Guidelines for Everyone

It is so easy to fall into the pattern of trying to think our way to happiness without following through with useful action and without seeing to emotional balance. This is

why we recommend the total approach—clear thinking, purposeful activity and regulated feeling, in harmony with thinking and activity. Here are some ideas:

1. Each day spend a few minutes alone for just being quiet and centered. At this time do not struggle to change or accomplish anything. Just be still. If need be, to get settled, observe the natural breathing pattern for a time and be aware here and now. Just be cool, serene and self-collected. Be the observer of thoughts and whatever feelings that surface. Know that you are not the thoughts, because you are not the mind. Know that you are not the feelings because you are not the feeling nature. Always begin any venture (whether it be an inner journey in consciousness or whether it be planning for setting goals and making decisions about future ventures and relationships) after first becoming clear and centered. Many "problems" will simply dissolve as a result of our resting at this clear center of our own being.

2. Spend time each day in purposeful and intelligent planning. Learn to set reasonable goals and acquire the know-how which will enable you to reach those goals. Many set reasonable goals but fail to acquire sufficient education relative to reaching those goals. If you require additional skills, acquire them; if you need more information, get it; if you need the advice of others who are more informed, seek that advice; if you need to experience by doing and in this way, build your confidence, then start with smaller goals first and learn by doing. Get out of the mental space and into practical involvement. This is one area where many need experience, the area of learning to move from mental picturing and planning to follow-through and practical communication and practical action. The New Thought field contains many people who try to think positive thoughts but who do not know how (or are afraid) to follow through with practical action. They tend to remain daydreamers and real life passes them by. Many are telling themselves that they are immortal beings but they are often not living to the full in the here and now. What is

the point of life if one is going to float through it without being in contact with reality?

3. Finally, let us learn to blend feeling with thoughts and activities. When thinking is clear and actions are purposeful and we feel (and are) confident, then we are self-actualized and all energies and abilities flow to an intended and useful end. When we know we are capable and when we feel we are capable then we can be capable. When soul awareness, thinking, and feeling are in harmony then we are established in the sense of being a total unit. Out of this experience of being we can then express ourselves creatively and well.

4. Regular meditation is our opportunity to rise free of the distractions of mind and feeling nature and rest consciously in the awareness of being a clear unit of consciousness. This is the experience of the soul nature. After we rest for a time in this experience we return our attention to the mental field, body and feeling nature while retaining the inner sense of being. Also, as we rest daily in the clear experience (not trying to experience any phenomena) it seems as though an opening is made permanent between the superconscious (clear) level of mind and the lower (subconscious and unconscious) levels of mind. Then, superconscious light (the reflected light of the soul) infiltrates lower levels of mind and gradually clears these levels. This is why meditation is useful for even advanced people who seem to be self-actualized and well balanced. Regular meditation (correctly practiced) clears the mind and feeling nature and prevents an accumulation of unwanted thought patterns and reactive patterns.

I know that I am a viewpoint of consciousness and that I have no separate existence. God plays His role through and as me just as he plays all other roles I see about me.

"Just as God is superior
to His Mind and the world,
so are we superior to our
mind and to our body."

Chapter 7

SPIRITUAL HEALTH AND A SOUND MIND IN A SOUND BODY

Consciousness is superior to mind and mind is superior to body. God is superior to Universal Mind and Universal Mind is superior to the worlds. When no resistance is offered to the flow of life, then health and natural function are experienced in the universe and through human mind and physical form.

Mental and physical health is natural to one who is spiritually healthy, and this is why we emphasize spiritual health first. While seeing to spiritual health, we also see to practical matters in relationship to mental and physical well-being. To concentrate on one aspect to the exclusion of others is not wise, nor is it a useful approach. I want to emphasize the importance of total well-being in this lesson. When we are totally well, we not only express our soul destiny, but we are also able to fully contribute to the welfare of others and our planet. The greatest service we can do for ourselves and for others is to see to our own inner knowledge and to a healthy functional mind and body. Let us clearly examine the various aspects of life and living so necessary to free and healthy expression. If we are closed in any area of life, we are not self-actualized and we are, therefore, in need of healing. To be self-actualized is to experience the natural and full synchronization of all of

our abilities, talents and energies as we move ahead to the completion of our reasonable life goals.

What Prevents Health and Free Expression?

There are many reasons for lack of function. One reason may be lack of understanding. We may not know how to live from the viewpoint of being a free spirit; we may not know how to creatively use the mind; we may have a built-in fear of life; we may be self-destructive because we do not feel worthy of health and happiness; we may not know of the laws relating to diet, rest and exercise; we may know the way to health and freedom, but we may be neglecting the essentials for one reason or another. Two things are required—knowledge and then the application of knowledge. If we do not know any better, we are then at the mercy of conditioned mental patterns and the influences of our environment. If we do know better but do not do better, our problem is one of inertia (we are lazy) or a not-so-subconscious drive to self-harm. With the wealth of information so easily at hand today, if we are reasonably intelligent we have no excuse for not paying attention to the basics. We know that we are made in the image and likeness of God. We know our nature is consciousness (being-intelligence-energy). We are immortal beings, and we have come to earth for only a time in order to express in a creative manner. We are merely passing through this dimension, on our way to a more expanded life-experience. Are we making the most of our opportunity? Are we living free in an open universe . . . or are we just drifting through life, hoping for an end to it all? We know our mind is a fragment of Universal Mind and that we have access to all that is Universal Mind. We know that our body is made up of the stuff of this world and that the body requires correct nourishment and a balance of motion and rest. With the knowledge at hand let us make the best possible use of this knowledge! I am talking to myself as I write these words and I am talking to you,

straight and clear. Straight and clear talk is essential if we are to be responsible and face up to the now-opportunity before us. Straight and clear understanding is essential if we are to function as heirs to the kingdom of God. Heaven means fulfillment, and when we live from a heavenly state of consciousness we know fulfillment in all areas of life experience. Heaven also refers to a sphere where soul-fulfilled beings dwell. The experience of soul-fulfillment is available in this world when we know truly and live out of soul awareness. This is why we stress spiritual health first, because health of mind and body follows automatically once we are aware of our true nature as a spiritual being.

Why Are Others Sick and Impoverished?

The laws of nature apply to each and every person. If any person is sick and impoverished it must be because of lack of true knowledge. We may sometimes assert that others are having a difficult time because of their environmental situation . . . but why is a person in his environment? Why does not a person who is living in an oppressive environment either change it or move from it? If we are blaming environment (and others) for our limitations, we are allowing ourselves to be victims of external influences instead of taking personal responsibility. If we are blaming tendencies we have on our family pattern, we are avoiding personal responsibility. Yes, we do acquire certain tendencies from those with whom we live and from those who have given us a body . . . but we can neutralize such tendencies once we know how to do so. Like it or not, our environment is our larger body and it is an extension of ourselves. If we created our environment and we no longer like it, we can change it. If we have just slipped into an environment created by others and we do not like it, we can move from it. The decision is always ours to make. Can we truly accept this point of view . . . "I am, from now on, responsible for all that I experience"? What is our present experience? Why is this our present experience?

What about exploitation, pain, suffering and the appearance of what we often refer to as evil? All that appears to be pain, suffering and limitation is the result of distortions in human mind and consciousness. As the energy of God flowed into expression as the worlds, it became modified and altered as it moved through the impressions and conditionings in Universal Mind and in human mind. Light, flowing through modifications of mind, is filtered and given the appearance of diversity. When we can shift our attention back to the source . . . back to the place of pure being . . . there is no diversity. Confusion only appears through the conditionings of the mind. We are not here saying that confusion does not exist. We are saying that, as individuals with the innate potential of seeing more clearly, we can choose to either live from an enlightened point of view or we can agree to live in a confused mental condition. We, ourselves, agree to our own life experience, and it is well for us to accept this truth. (Truth is defined as "That which is so; that which is not subject to change or modification due to personal opinion.") When mind is clouded by mental impressions, soul light is filtered and natural discernment is obscured; that is why bright spirits seem at times like unaware spirits. The soul is ever the same as pure being, but when it identifies with a conditioned mental field it takes on the characteristics of being less than clear. When we meditate correctly and rest in the inner awareness of our true nature, we are not escaping from reality, we are returning our attention to that which is Real. The Real is pure and does not change; the outer, while manifesting, is subject to change in time and space.

How to be Assured of Spiritual Health, Always

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." What a strong and to-the-point reminder of our essential duty!

When we are established in the awareness of our relationship with God and with what is useful to God's destined purpose, we know inner peace and outer fulfillment. God does have a destined purpose for us and for the universe. This entire situation is a drama of lights and shadows projected on the screen of time and space; everything is God appearing-as we behold it. This is the truth. Spiritual health is assured as a result of attention to needed disciplines (to clear mind and consciousness and to enable us to work in harmony with natural laws), as a result of self-examination and the examination of the nature of God, as a result of correct meditation, and as a result of total surrender to God's will. We do not engage in discipline of any kind to cause anything to happen to us; we engage in discipline to allow the soul to find perfect expression. Our self-examination is for the purpose of clear understanding of the nature of the soul and the nature of God. Our regular (and correct) meditation is our time for returning consciously to the source of power and intelligence deep within ourselves. When we surrender to God's will, we learn to move with the flow of life as it unfolds about us . . . always in the direction of clear understanding and a greater soul expression. If we move with environmental influences (usually caused by the intentions of others) and find ourselves becoming more confused, we can be almost certain that we are moving in the direction of inertia instead of in the direction of light and knowledge.

I often talk with people who are sincere on the spiritual path but who are confused because they are not centered in soul awareness. Attention to the above basics will insure soul awareness. How easy it often is to become caught up in the games other people play! How easy it often is to get off the straight and obvious way to inner knowledge and freedom! It is not for nothing that some teachers have referred to the spiritual path as the razor's edge. The spiritual path is "thin," and it takes attention to detail if one's mind is not to be confused by the input of data and influence from without.

How to be Assured of Mental-Emotional Health, Always

Here are guidelines to assure mental-emotional health. Again, all this takes is attention to details. No great effort or sacrifice is involved. We can tell what we truly love by noting that to which we pay attention.

1. *Meditation*: Correct meditation will allow us to experience our inner nature as pure awareness. Are we meditating correctly? Read our book *An Easy Guide to Meditation* several times and pay attention to the fine details. Then, meditate correctly for the relaxation benefits and for inner awareness. As we relax at the deeper layers of body, we experience a release of suppressed material from the unconscious layer of mind. When this material is released the soul can express with little or no resistance.

2. *Mental Attitude*: Are we optimistic, cheerful and happy, or are we negative in outlook, unhappy and a challenge to live with? Each and every day as we awaken from sleep we can adjust the mental attitude and decide how the day will go for us and our associates. All it takes is the decision and the minor mental-emotional adjustment. Our mental attitude is the window through which we see the world and the entry through which our world flows to us. We can see problems or we can see possibilities. We can be open to life or we can let conditions get to us. We can love and accept others or we can shut others out. It all depends upon our mental attitude and upon our personal sense of responsibility to face and see life as it can be.

3. *Awareness*: How aware are we? Do events handle us or do we handle ourselves well in space and time? How well do we observe our environment without judgment? How well do we handle ourselves with others? How well do we handle our time? How well do we handle our energy? Do we really see what is happening or do we move through our day in a mental fog? To be conscious means

to be aware. To be unconscious means to move through life with little or no awareness.

4. *Regulating Mental Images*: Images flow through the mental field, and we must take responsibility for regulating the flow. We do this by observing what takes place in the mind and by making the decision about how the mind will be used. Sometimes it is useful to just let thoughts stream through the mind while we watch them because, in time, the mental stream will cease. Thoughts are harmless because they are not us. Thoughts are merely impressions which flow along through the mental field. Some excursions into fantasy and daydreaming are useful because they allow the opportunity for suppressed thought patterns to find release without their having to be expressed on the body level. Too much daydreaming can be an escape from facing life's opportunities. How does our mental conversation go? Most of us, whether we are aware of the process or not, have a steady stream of mental conversations going on in the mind, even while we do our work and attend to our routine duties. Is this mental conversation (with imagined people) positive or negative? This will give an idea as to how our approach to life really is. (Have you ever consciously held to a positive ideal and, yet, found yourself breathing an inner sigh of relief when the ideal was not realized?) The play between levels of mind is interesting! We can think in a positive fashion yet be reluctant to move on the body level. We can feel confident and yet be afraid to act. We can also "fake it" badly and move into situations with a bold outward manner but with no inner assurance.

5. *Being on Top of Memory*: Our subconscious memory-file is loaded with data which has been accumulated for centuries. Most of us have access to memory-records relative to this life-cycle, but we are not aware of deeper impressions. Patanjali, in the *Yoga Sutras* (see our title *This is Reality*), states that memory is the major barrier to soul-realization. The reason for this assertion is that when the soul is identified with mind it is also tied into impres-

sions of the mind. This is why memory is a major challenge to many people. Not only can we not often handle memories of past experiences (because there are so many which flood the conscious level of mind), but we also do not want to face the unpleasant past because we have not cleared our memory file in relationship to our attitudes and feelings. There are often events that we have experienced that we wish had not happened . . . for which we feel sorry . . . or we hope no other person knows because they would not understand. There are at least two ways out of the problem. One, we can face up to ourselves and get clear on the obvious fact that we have to confront all the data in the subconscious eventually. Two, we can rest assured that God knows everything and that God does not judge and that all will be well with us once we have come to terms with our memories and our feelings.

6. *Creative Use of the Mind*: We all have the ability to use the mind creatively. We can handle memories, we can adjust the mental attitude, we can be aware, we can use imagination to plan for the future and to see the world the way we know it can be. As we use controlled imagination . . . to see the world the way we know it can be . . . we become co-workers with God in the great plan of world transformation. I am not here talking about whim-guided will . . . I am referring to inner direction and true soul influence. Once we are under grace (when soul intelligence is dominant), we are sure to use the mind wisely. Once we are certain of our motives and our inner guidance, we are free to use the mind as a creative tool for the good of others and to experience easy movement through our world. There is the level of mental cause and effect; here we make things happen through mental picturing. There is another level, the level of grace; here we allow things to unfold according to our ability to accept what comes to mind as being useful in God's plan. Causing vs. acceptance can be a theme of a near-future lesson. It is an initiation experience to break through in understanding and realize the difference between mental causation vs. God unfold-

ing. At the level of mental causation we can sometimes be too ego-directed; when God unfolds His will through us there is always perfect timing and appropriate happening.

7. *Emotions as Related to Mind*: Feelings flow from a deeper level of the mental field, and feelings reinforce mental pictures which are referred to as desires. Feelings also surge without mental pictures and we cannot always label such feelings . . . except as urges and needs. Sometimes the body has needs . . . to be fed, exercised, relieved of waste matter. Sometimes the soul needs companionship. Sometimes the personality needs companionship. Often there is the urge to mate, to share and to express fulfillment-inclinations. There is a reason why this world is male and female, why nature is the manifestation of need and fulfillment; this is how God expresses as this world, and without interaction and balance there could not be a world at all. Natural (harmonious and appropriate) interaction is the principle upon which the manifest worlds are based. Life is always abundantly expressive when fulfillment is natural and appropriate. We have all noted, with soul acknowledgement, the gleam in a lover's eye . . . the natural sense of fulfillment experienced while with a healthy family unit . . . and the obvious rightness about a saint's devotion to God. Handling emotions as related to thoughts and relationships is one of the major challenges for every person who takes on a body on this plane. A key to being emotionally free is to be objective and not too personally involved (if this is possible . . . and it is) and to allow freedom (space) to others. If there is guilt about relationships . . . or a power effort (to control others for our own purposes), we will surely experience conflict. Envy, jealousy, regret, pride, hate . . . etc., are offshoots of our lack of understanding relative to human or world relationships.

On Being a Conscious Mortal-Immortal

To fully understand this section of the lesson, please

read, carefully, the last chapter in *Yoga Darsana* as well as the biographies of the enlightenment masters included in the final pages. Read about Babaji, the Siddhas of the Himalayas and about the Shivapuri Baba. You will gain insight into the mental attitude of the saints as well as more closely understand the practical matters of daily activity. I have observed that enlightened people are very natural and that they are attentive to needed duties. One has written that virtue is not in doing extraordinary things . . . but in doing ordinary things extraordinarily well. How pleasing to the soul-sense to acknowledge this!

Let us not be too sudden in our conclusions about conscious mortal-immortals. Mortality refers but to the body, which will fade from view sooner or later. The inner spirit is immortal and works through any number of bodies over a span of years. Let us never forget that God alone is the ruler and only support of all lines of teaching, as well as the ruler and only support of all that appears in our world (as well as in the subtle realms). And since I am in communication with many conscious beings, I can report to you that whenever a conscious being departs from natural patterns of living (overwork of the body, lack of attention to needed nutrition, too much involvement with confused seekers, etc.), problems arise. Such problems do not interfere with soul awareness, but they interfere with body function. Alert people will see to needed time for soul refreshment . . . alone and free from outside input of a restless and confused nature. Alert and conscious people will also see to needed food input (vitamins, minerals, balanced nutrition, etc.) as well as to sufficient rest spaced in between occasions of activity (work and exercise). I know several enlightened people who never talk about private matters but who (I observe) see to rest, proper foods for their individual needs and use time for exercise and recreation. If we are overworked, underfed, and taking in too much stress-creating mental-emotional data . . . how can we live free and be soul-expressive? Almost all enlightened people I know are aware of herbs, fasting, elimi-

nation of body wastes, and a spare food intake. They must know something that many who are in conditioned consciousness do not know! What most enlightened masters are aware of is the value of living a simple and natural life.

Our outer life matters little. God does not care whether we drive a special brand of car, live with much or less, have money in the bank or not . . . what really matters is our own inner awareness and the fact of whether or not we are living in harmony with our world as we are inwardly destined to live.

I know that I am superior to mind and that, through mind, I reflect as this body. Therefore, being healthy as a spiritual being, my mind and body reflect health.

"God alone rules the worlds.
God alone appears as all we
behold. Therefore, trust
God in everything."

Chapter 8

LIVING WITH TOTAL FAITH AND TRUST IN GOD

It has been said that God is seeking us more than we are seeking God. What does this mean? It means that the soul is seeking expression and wants to express even more than the conditioned mind desires freedom. Unconscious man, working through his mind which is loaded with impressions and memories, more often thinks in terms of survival only, rather than embracing the ideal of conscious knowledge and freedom. To be liberated means to be free from the restricting patterns of the mind and from the tendencies of the subconscious nature. To many people, survival is a matter of adaptation, of making do, of getting by with a minimum of pain and challenge. But we were born for more than mere survival. We were born to awaken and to be conscious. One who truly awakens never has to be born again. One who is truly conscious never has to die again. Birth and death are both events in time, a mild awakening to this realm and then a withdrawing from it.

Of course, the soul never really is born and never really dies. The emergence into this plane is called birth and the withdrawal is called death. For many it is but a matter of becoming conscious in a new body, living out the few decades allotted by nature and karma, and then resting for a little while. When we take on a body we assume a body

destiny. Bodies mature, they function, they slow down and begin to cease functioning. This is growing up, living our lives and then preparing for death to this world. It happens in the plant kingdom and it happens in the animal kingdom. It happens to most people. Karma is the accumulated mental impressions (memory) which give our personality a style of its own and which cause desire, fear, confusion and the host of other urges, tendencies, and reactions we experience. How many of us really know where we came from, what we are to do while here, and where we are going? How many of us really and truly experience life instead of just moving through time and space? How conscious, how aware are we? The average person is only partially conscious. This is why truth teachers say that the average person lives out his life as in a dream condition.

We have had the information regarding creative living, in books and through available teachers, for hundreds of years. We have the information regarding how to use the mind creatively, how to meditate, how to relate to others and our world, and how to take care of our body and arrange our personal environment. Are we wisely using the information we have? Are we self-actualized? Are we living up to our full potential? Knowing better is one thing, but doing better is more useful. Do we regulate our mental images, or do we allow ourselves to float off into fantasy as an escape from this-world reality? Do we consciously remain optimistic, or are we given to moods and occasions of dark despair? Do we share our love and joy, or do we ask of others without giving in return? Are we selfish and narrow-minded, or are we generous and understanding? Do we really have faith, and do we really trust God in every situation and all times? Are we self-willed, from a personality level, or are we open to the guidance of the soul?

Trusting God . . . Up to a Point

Many go through the stage of learning how to use the

mind in a creative manner. They learn how to visualize, picture, pray and "see dreams true." It is a beautiful experience to learn how to use the mind creatively . . . but do we use our mental skills intelligently? These are questions we all must ask of ourselves. It is true that there is a Universal Mind which is omnipresent and in which everything is taking place. It is true that our mind is a fragment of this Mind. We have the ability to modify and rearrange our environment through the use of our mental ability. I would add that we have a responsibility to use our mental ability wisely and to contribute to the welfare of others, as well as to the health of the planet. This is why we recommend meditation before using creative visualization. When we meditate correctly, we rest in the experience of clear awareness and we are in need of nothing. We have no problems. All is well. After meditation we turn our attention to our world and make decisions, set goals and solve problems. We are then able to handle ourselves in relationship with our world from the viewpoint of clear understanding.

When life is flowing along beautifully well it is easy to be open and trust in God. When we face a heavy crisis we are often forced to turn to God. However, often when we are doing reasonably well and feel pretty much in control of our affairs, it is sometimes easy to fall into the pattern of manipulating others or of controlling our environment almost totally, because we feel we must be in charge. We do not always have total faith in God. We are afraid of the future, we become emotional in a crisis, we sometimes look after personal needs even if others have to suffer as a result. Sometimes we are sure that God is benevolent and caring, and, at other times, we wonder if God really cares and if God is really supportive. We sometimes hold onto attitudes and behavior patterns, because we inwardly feel that if we give up, if we surrender to the urge of the soul to be free, things might never be the same again.

A man once visited a saint and talked all around the subject of God. Finally the saint said, "You are like a

person who is forever talking about eating a delicious piece of fruit but who never gets around to actually tasting the fruit. God is real and God is available to you. Why don't you give up your mental restlessness and just take a bite?" Yes, why not just give up the doubt and the superficial examination of this philosophy, and just plunge in and experience life to the full?

Initiation after Initiation

We experience initiation any time we break through into a new level of understanding. We were born, we grew up, we experienced puberty, we matured, we learned to get along in this world. There is another awakening, and this is the awakening of the soul nature. Jesus talked about it when he referred to being born again. One who is twice-born is spiritually quickened, and in such a person there is a conscious urging to know the final truth about life. A person who is spiritually quickened possesses subtle perceptions and is able to discern the truth about life, after a time of examination and after a time of experimentation.

Every soul wants to awaken and be free. At the conscious mind level some people resist the urge of the soul to be expressive, but in time soul needs will overcome the resistance of the mind and the seeming disinterest of the personality. There is no rush for all on the planet to experience enlightenment, because everything is already predestined as far as the masses of people are concerned. We are, according to some calculations, into the ascending electrical time-cycle. (See the chapter "Ten Thousand Years of Light" in my book *The Way of the Initiate*.) Because of our current time-cycle many people are awakening spiritually and many already-bright souls are incarnating. This trend will continue for a few thousand years and culminate in a true Age of Enlightenment. Some teachers and some teaching traditions are geared to work with the masses as they awaken over the long evolutionary span of time. Other teachers and teaching traditions are on the front line

to meet the needs of souls now ready to enter fully into a conscious relationship with God. Most of the latter teachers (and traditions), while giving emphasis to the new-opportunity for awakening, also work with the larger population. I learned from my line of gurus to think in terms of both quantity and quality as far as the ministry is concerned. Quantity has to do with reaching as many people as possible with a useful how-to-live message. Quality has to do with looking for those special few among the many who are ripe for esoteric (inner) teaching. I have thousands of students, for instance, but only a few disciples. To students I give of my knowledge, of my spirit, and of my genuine concern for their welfare. I hold nothing back, but the student has to be open to receive. To disciples I give everything and even go a step further; I challenge and discipline in order to bring out the highest and best of which they are capable. I see all truth students as the same, for they are all deserving of the best teaching available. I acknowledge personality and personal traits, but I see God trying to express through everyone. With disciples I recognize a soul-kinship that often has been the result of centuries of relating. At a deeper level we are all related, and at an even deeper level there is only the One playing various roles and assuming all viewpoints. Seeing this in proper perspective we can never become heavy handed or overly concerned about the external happenings on this earth plane.

Have you ever wondered why saints are cheerful and in good humor even in the midst of strife and challgenge? They must know something, and they do. They know that this outer drama is God's play. They know that this outer-drama is a ceaseless activity of Divine Consciousness. Swami Muktananda titled one of his books *Chitshakti Vilas* (The Play of Consciousness). *Chitshakti* means Divine Conscious Energy expressing as nature. There is a dynamic force which drives the energy of nature, and this is *kundalini* or the basic underlying force which is all pervading and all directing. Some call it evolutionary energy, and this

term is as good as any. We are here playing with words used in different cultures, but we are dealing with the dynamic essential. Without the energy of God there would be no manifest worlds and even if manifest as planets and bodies in space there would be no life evident. The one life is the life of God. When the energy of God flows through the conditioned minds of people and through the plants, animal bodies and human forms, this energy becomes challenged and misdirected at times. God can only work clearly through clear channels. God could will otherwise, but this would not be the way of evolution, the way of gradual transformation of matter so that God can fulfill the predestined plan.

If I were writing to Sanskrit students I would mention that God is both *Purusha* and *Prakriti*: both the indwelling Intelligence and the manifest aspect of nature. God is the substance that manifests as things, and God is the intelligence directing the unfoldment of beings as well as the happenings in nature. God manifests as opposites, in case you haven't noticed! Male and female created He them. There is not only the mating process which results in the formation of new bodies, but there is also the interchange of energies which make "glad the heart." Happiness is the natural "uprising" of the soul's nature when I freely acknowledge release from bondage and natural interaction with the Play of Consciousness.

Getting On With This Matter of Conscious Living

It's fun to play with words, and it's fun to quote the words of other people and to call up from the memory file images of the good times and of the interesting times. But how about the now-times? What is happening now with us and our world? Is life as fulfilling as it should be? Is our understanding clear? Are we in tune with nature and moving each day in harmony with the natural order of creation? Are we in health and are we really prosperous? (That scares some people, to get to the basics and to think of being healthy, functional, and rich in the flow of God's

aspect as money and things.) BE SCARED! Experience being scared if fright floats to the surface of your mind and if uneasiness tends to overcome your emotional nature. Look at it! Get clear on it! Why are we afraid to be free and totally without any restriction or limitation whatsoever? Look at the fear. Look at the subconscious response to the challenge of being free of all of the nonsense that has been going on. I told you living was fun!

Here are some useful things to do to insure conscious living:

1. *Put Order Into Your Life*—Clean up the loose ends in your life. Take care of matters that have been pending and which have been causing mental strain and concern. Such strain and concern causes stress to accumulate in the system and suppresses life-force or available energy. Strain and concern causes mental and emotional confusion and shuts down our awareness. It also tends to cause us to withdraw from life out of fear and unhappiness. Clear your relationships if need be, solve any interpersonal problems, and learn to be on good and understanding terms with others. Get clear on your duties and learn to handle them easily and well. If need be, clean up your environment and throw out unwanted or useless items. Anything you have which is not useful to you but which is still serviceable, give to someone or to some charity.

2. *Have a Daily Schedule for Personal Improvement*—See to regular exercise, pay attention to correct diet, have some time alone for reflection and contemplation. We all have twenty-four hours each day to use wisely. All it takes is the decision to schedule time and then follow through with our intentions.

3. *Meditate Each and Every Day*—Even if you feel good, bright and totally aware, meditate each and every day for the relaxation benefits. This will insure that you remain free from stress, and you will gradually release stress from deeper levels of your body. For relaxation purposes a meditation session of twenty minutes is adequate. Twice a day is recommended.

4. *Get In the Flow of Life*—The only opportunity we have to experience the flow of life is now. Think of what you would do if you were free and creative and then do these things. Avoid such self-limiting thoughts as, "I'm getting to that point," or "I'm trying." Think positive, feel creative and confident, act like a creative and successful person. Our attitude and sense of being determines our life experience. If we live out of the consciousness of being free, we will be free. If we live out of the consciousness of being limited . . . while working in the direction of freedom . . . we will remain limited. Communicate with others in an open and fair manner. Think in terms of letting life flow through you to benefit your world. If we think in terms of "getting" from life, we are sure to close ourselves off from the flow. We can have what we need for comfortable living, but this is the natural happening as we remain in harmony with nature, people and events.

When we are open to the flow of life, we naturally prosper. Life supports itself unless, on the human scene, there is a shutting down of awareness and a resistance of the flow. Resistance may be the result of a poverty consciousness (the inability to accept plenty), or it may be due to a restless mind which cannot allow the flow to be experienced. No person is doomed to poverty because of past causes; the cause of poverty is always present in the mind and state of consciousness. When the mind is re-educated and the consciousness is open and clear, then abundance is natural. Here is the simple truth: we can handle as much of this world's things and activities as we can be responsible for. First we have to be responsible for ourselves, our attitudes and actions, then we can be responsible for working with things, people and events.

The things of this world are energy formed. Natural formations are due to life expressing through nature. Trees grow, plants flourish, minerals are formed in the earth, the products we use are given us from nature's bounty. From raw materials we form objects for use and comfort, and these objects are still energy formed as the object. Cloth-

ing, building materials, tools, machines, money, books and magazines . . . all are the result of man's imagination and practical use of available raw materials. There is no lack of energy in the universe. Energy is never depleted. It is converted to one form or another. There can be a temporary shortage of things due to trends in nature and man's lack of wise use of available energy for specific purposes. One thing must be understood: we can draw to ourselves that which we require for creative living. We should never think in terms of being limited or restricted because of lack of opportunity, lack of formal education, social conditions, domestic conditions, or lack of work or old age. The law is ever the same: we attract to ourselves what we need as a result of our mental attitude, our state of consciousness, and our ability to flow with life.

I recommend that a person use his common sense and native ability to handle himself in this world. If doors seem to be closed, if one cannot see the way clear, even if conditions seem to be impossible, we still have the freedom to dream, to imagine, to believe and to open ourselves to unexpected good. Do not limit God by believing that supply must flow only through known and predetermined channels. God has ways that the mind of man cannot even fathom. God is willing to nourish, support and guide each soul, but the person must be open and responsive to the activity of God. We make a mistake if we think in terms of giving after we have received plenty, if we think of being happy after conditions are ideal, and if we think of blessing others after the pressure is off and we have the time and inclination to think of others. Daily let us give to life according to our means. Daily let us be happy and cheerful. Daily let us love and bless all we meet and all who come to mind. Remember, "according to your faith it is done unto you." By living from the firm base of knowing and trusting and proving this by living up to our full potential and by letting life flow through us, we find that we dwell in the kingdom of fulfillment or heaven.

If you need more education, acquire it. If you need to

learn to handle yourself in business or social settings, learn to do it. If you need to look at money and see it for what it is, do it. The secret is to work from the level of understanding that you are a free spirit and that it is your responsibility to learn to handle yourself in space and time and to handle yourself in relationship to things. It is not a matter of us against the world. It is a matter of our being in partnership with the Great Life that is responsible for all that unfolds as the world process. By ourselves we are limited, no matter how extensive seems our sphere of influence. With God, all inspired things are possible!

Often, in relationship to handling ourselves in this world, we need to train the subconscious level of mind to accept what the conscious level agrees to; we may think positive thoughts but feel insecure, afraid and inadequate. It may take time to alter the subconscious patterns, or, on the other hand, it may happen in a flash of insight. Never underestimate the possibility of instant change. Miracles are possible. A miracle is usually merely a natural occurrence that unfolds without the factor of time passing.

Let us be daily reminded that we live in an ocean of Infinite Mind, and this Mind is responsive to our needs even when we ourselves are not always conscious of needs. We attract to ourselves the people and the resources required to fulfill our destiny in this world, because we are living out our lives in this ocean of Mind. The "one mind common to all men" is the Mind of God. The key to self-actualization, the key to fully expressing our true abilities is to launch out into this ocean of Mind with courage and gain experience through participation. Expect the highest and best, always. In the beginning there may be only some partial successes along with the really dramatic happenings. Everything is a learning experience, and by stepping forth with courage we soon learn how to live in harmony with natural laws and how to function in this Mind of God. Some of the most successful people in the world started from unspectacular beginnings and through inspiration, motivation and the will to experience, learned

to be open to life's great bounty. Sometimes we think in terms of what we want from life. A more useful approach might be to think in terms of what life wants to do through us. This results in the greatest joy and the greatest experience of true inner fulfillment. From early beginnings most truly fulfilled men and women come to the place in their lives when they know an inner sense of destiny, where they feel they are really doing what they were meant to do. One's destiny need not be great in the eyes of the public. One's destiny may be to live a simple well-ordered life with inner understanding. What a contribution to the general health of the larger society we make when we are consciously doing what we are destined to do and we flow with the natural order! When we are in the flow we do not make excuses, procrastinate, find fault with others, or feel restricted or intimidated. When we are in the flow we are serene, conscious and happy always.

God is the only Reality. I have total trust in God.
Moment to moment, all is well because God rules.

"God guides us through our intuition and our intelligence. Conscious cooperation with God is the way to liberation."

Chapter 9

GOD'S MIND, OUR MIND and CREATIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN GOD AND OURSELVES

In perfect communion, soul and God relate perfectly without mental or emotional involvement. But, while we function in the relative worlds, when we relate to God we relate directly through soul to God communion, as well as through the medium of mind. God's mind is that omnipresent subtle material substance in which electrical activity occurs and, therefore, in which all things in the universe are manifest. Man's mind is a fragment, an individualization of this cosmic mind. Because God has a mind and because the soul uses a small portion of this mind (which is known as our mind or as human mind), creative cooperation between God and ourselves is possible.

Man's Will and God's Will Examined

Man has comparative freedom in the relative world. We see this as we examine man's history on the planet and as we look around in our present world. We see that man is capable of creative innovation, can learn from the past, can use creative imagination and possibility thinking to plan new and different futures, can solve problems, and can almost master nature. I say *almost master nature* because

the energies in nature will never be fully mastered. The reason for this is that the evolutionary thrust of nature is due to the intelligence of God and is, therefore, God's will. So long as we work in harmony with nature and the evolutionary trend of nature, we can do almost anything the mind can imagine. If we are not in harmony with nature and the evolutionary trend in nature, we may go so far and then find ourselves stopped in our efforts.

According to esoteric teachings, mankind is now in the ascending electrical sub-cycle (as the grand cycle moves in the direction of the Age of Enlightenment, which is yet a few thousand years distant). This is the cycle of once again becoming aware of the energies in nature and of learning to utilize them correctly for the good of all people. We are discovering new energy sources; we are discovering new communications tools; we are well on the way to being God's instruments through which the Kingdom of Heaven (fulfillment) is to manifest on this earth plane. But we should not be impatient; the unfoldment of consciousness through human mind takes place slowly.

Some wonder why the awakening of souls on a grand scale is not more rapid. I assure you, the clock of God is on time. What is now evident on the world scene was predicted centuries ago to manifest in our present time-cycle. We have relative freedom to make of our private world what we will. We are as gods in our known universe. But, when working for long-range purposes and for the good of man and the natural order, we have a responsibility to be open to guidance so that we know just how to proceed. The plan for this world is not that man remain in human consciousness with all of the comforts for body and sense needs. The plan is that man live in this world with conscious understanding (enlightenment), and then comforts and conveniences will naturally follow according to real need instead of imagined need. Food, shelter, mental and physical health, economic freedom, and personal freedom (without violating the freedoms of others) are inner desires for all people. If we strive to

assure these conditions without corresponding inner understanding, we will not be fulfilled or truly happy, even if we succeed in creating what we feel to be an ideal world. True knowledge of the soul nature, the nature of God, and what the plan for this world really is will result in harmony in this world and happiness for those who dwell here. This is why we must ask of ourselves; "What is God's will for me and for my life on earth in relationship with others?" Once we are under inner guidance, we then are free to use our creative abilities to the fullest to participate with nature's trends.

Some will ask if the present suffering and the present conflicts reported so frequently through the news media are God's will. God does not cause suffering or incite conflict between people. Suffering is only due to lack of understanding (which is the cause of problems). I know this does not fully satisfy the mind when we think in relationship of the suffering of children or people who seem caught in impossible circumstances not of their own choosing. Here we could get into a discussion of how "states of consciousness" result in a soul being involved in outer circumstances. We are sometimes caught up in circumstances, not because we desire it for anything we thought or did in the past, but because this is where we are in human consciousness. In human (conditioned) consciousness almost any possible experience can be ours, just as when we dream almost any type of dream experience can be ours because of the condition of body chemistry, mental impressions currently active, and emotions present. We label some dreams pleasant, some dreams not so pleasant (and a few dreams just awful), but they are only dreams and take place in the mind alone.

Everything is Experienced in Mind in the Relative Worlds

Yes, even though we take in information through the senses, it is the mind which translates the information and

pronounces it good or bad, desirable or not desirable. Why is it that we can dream and experience seeming reality (even to the point of sense satisfaction and emotional fulfillment)? This is possible because the mind of man contains subtle counterparts of the senses. Desire springs from urges and desire can be satisfied on the subtle mental level. One can experience the satisfaction of desire while dreaming . . . and one can, if possessed of great powers of conscious visualization, imagine how it might be to have an experience and fully explore the possibility even to the point of satisfaction. The deeper layer of mind does not know the difference between the memory of a vividly imagined experience and an experience remembered as a result of outer sense involvement. One can also vividly imagine an experience and believe it possible of outer manifesation and see it outwardly expressed; we do this when we set and reach goals through controlled imagination. Some of the daydreamers of our world are responsible for many of our most useful inventions and discoveries, while some of the hard working people of the world contribute very little of lasting value. (This is not to say that all daydreamers contribute or that all hard working people do not.)

Yes, because we are using a mind which is a fragment of God's mind, we can cooperate with the cosmic activity as well as invite the Power that runs the universe into our personal world. Why is it that we seem so helpless when we really have the Power of the universe with which to work? I did not say that we have the Power of the universe to use. We are to learn to cooperate with this Power. The intelligence directing this Power is the same intelligence which is innate to each one of us at the soul level. When we awaken to the awareness of who and what we really are and what our relationship to God is, all possible things can be outwardly manifested. This innate reality wants to express, but it needs a responsive mind and an open attitude through which to express. This is why we have our guidelines; when we practice self-discipline, study the

nature of consciousness, meditate to know the truth, and trust in the goodness of God, then the innate power can flow into expression. In other words, we have to do our part to be open and receptive. We have to be responsive and responsible. When we respond to inner guidance we are responsive. When we move with courage we are responsible. Higher ways are not lower ways and God's ways are not man's ways. (By *man* we refer to the soul which is identified with mental conditionings.)

Creative Cooperation Between God and Ourselves

Let us examine possible ways of creative cooperation between God and ourselves in a practical way. Philosophy and instruction in truth principles is one thing, and it does satisfy the mind and clear soul awareness. But practical results are also needed by most people.

I well recall my own early days when I was led to start in this ministry. I had inner understanding but little knowledge (and less experience) about how to relate to the world around me. I found that if I was open and not afraid to make mistakes I could learn to be a channel through which useful work could be done. I also found that God is benevolent and that there is a caring aspect to God that extends even to small areas of one's life. I found, too, that there were times when it seemed I felt alone and working for God, but with God somewhere behind the front lines allowing me to go forward as best I could. In every instance (looking back and examining matters), I find that all experience was useful. Perhaps you have had similar experiences and have drawn similar conclusions? One thing is sure: our outer experience is a reflection of our inner state of consciousness. This has been taught by every master teacher over the centuries because it is the truth. Sometimes we may not want to accept this teaching, but in our quiet moments we know we cannot deny it. This teaching both explains the reasons for past experiences as

well as gives us the key to future experience. Here are some things to do:

1. *If We Feel Out of Place* – Affirm and know, "I am now in my right place in God's plan." Affirmation is one thing: the results will be directly proportionate to our knowing. So affirm, feel and know, "I am now in my right place in God's plan." After the practice sessions, however long it takes, emerge from the session and think, feel and act . . . "I am now in my right place in God's plan."

2. *If We Feel Lonely* – Affirm and know, "I am self-complete in God." How can we be lonely when we know our real nature and when we know our real relationship with God? Once we are established in this understanding we will have peace of mind and emotional contentment. We will also notice that we attract into our lives the right people with whom we can enjoy open and mature relationships.

3. *If We Feel Afraid* – Know that God is taking care of the world and God is taking care of us. True courage is ours when we work from the level of soul understanding. As we learn to work in harmony with nature and as we learn to function in this world, we lose our fear. We experience that we live in a friendly universe which is supportive and nourishing, always.

4. *If We Are Confused* – First be settled in meditation. After meditation know, "My mind is a portion of God's mind. My mind is clear and my thoughts well ordered. I use my mind intelligently. I have perfect recall of memories. With intelligence I can discern the truth, solve problems, and use mind and time wisely and productively."

5. *If We are Emotionally Unsettled* – Work from the understanding that: "I am not dependent upon anything external to myself. I do not need attachments nor do I need recognition. I am at peace within, always. My relationships with others and with my world are harmonious, free, and open.

6. *If Relationships Need to be Improved* – Know, "I acknowledge all people as expressions of God. I acknowl-

edge all activity as the activity of God. I take personal responsibility for open and clear communication, while being fair to others and accepting only fair dealings for myself."

7. *If We Need Healing of the Body* – Know, "I acknowledge that Consciousness is superior to mind and mind is superior to matter. I work from the level of understanding that as a perfect being I cannot know limitation or illness. I use the mind wisely, remain emotionally clear, and live in accord with the laws of nature."

8. *If We Need to Prosper* – Know this: "Outer evidence of prosperity is but a reflection of inner understanding and acceptance. I inwardly accept the truth that I am a perfect and fulfilled being, made in the image and likeness of God. I accept prosperity now because there is no lack in God. I open myself to see life unfold in perfect proportion about me, while doing what I know to do in practical matters."

9. *If We Are in Need of Greater Understanding* – Instead of accepting unawareness, know this: "As a perfect being I am already possessed of total understanding. I open my mind to the possibility of accepting the light of the soul. I release concepts and opinions which restrict the emergence of soul knowledge to my awareness."

Once we have been educated into the understanding of the nature of the mind, it is up to us to then use the mind creatively. Some, who either cannot or will not use the mind creatively, will say, "The principle always works, but it is up to the individual to learn to make the necessary adjustments in attitude and to learn to be open.

Some Things to Know About Using the Mind Creatively

One can have a healthy body and a sound mind but still not be using the mind wisely. One problem many have is that they do not have a will to live. They have an attitude of just getting by, making do, or letting things

happen. This results in confusion and self-justification. It also results in a lack of having a definite purpose and direction in life. One who is confused cannot plan goals for the future and cannot make up his mind about anything. To clear away confusion one should obtain all available information about a project and then be objective in analyzing the situation. Then decisions should be made as well as practical follow-through handled with confidence and efficiency. We should use our natural abilities to the utmost while remembering that we are supported by the great Power of the universe. We are not alone in this world. We are in partnership with God. But the influence of God can only express through a mind which is open and receptive.

Sometimes, we must be open to inner guidance and aware of the often importance of proper timing. We have all experienced unexpected opportunity being presented to us. How is this possible? It is because life is One Thing and is forever conscious of Itself. We are part of one grand organic process. It is not a matter of God and us, the world and us, or other people and us. It is a matter of God as the world, as us, and as other people. When we see from this point of view we experience cosmic consciousness. When we see from this point of view we experience order, harmony, and natural fulfillment without undue effort, strain, or struggle.

SUGGESTED MEDITATION ROUTINES

Every now and then I am told by students that they are not getting positive results from meditation practice. One reason for lack of results may be that one is trying too hard to make something happen. Relaxation and gentle expectation is the best approach. Sometimes, too, one may slip into a routine during meditation when one is not really alert . . . but just sits and mentally floats while the time passes. It is important, when we meditate, to remain conscious and alert during the entire time.

Another problem for some is that they have so many meditation techniques at their disposal that they switch around too much or they do not know in what order to practice techniques. Here is a suggested routine for advanced meditators:

1. *Approach Meditation in a Positive Frame of Mind* – Approach meditation with mild anticipation and an attitude of mind that will result in a relaxed creative experience.

2. *Pray to God* – Pray simply and acknowledge God's presence. Inwardly acknowledge your own divinity. Be reminded that we meditate in order to rest consciously in the experience of our nature as pure consciousness.

3. *Enter into Meditation* – Either naturally enter the silence and allow the process to flow or use a technique such as mantra, affirmation, or listening to the inner sound.

4. Meditate until you are peaceful and serene, with a feeling that all is well. Do not give up if thoughts remain active or if you cannot remain in concentration. If we sit long enough and wait, while being alert, we will pass that difficult stage of mental restlessness and begin to experience inner peace.

5. After meditation come out slowly and give yourself time to re-educate the mind. This is the time to clear false thinking from the mind, release emotional problems, set goals, use creative visualization, and do whatever is useful to be fully in tune with your world.

6. After meditation feel happy, centered, optimistic, and on good terms with your world. Do not slip into a negative mental state or assume negative emotional patterns. Live out of the new consciousness.

7. *Contemplation* – Meditation is the process of being clear and aware. Contemplation is when we flow attention to a subject about which we want insight. We might, for instance, contemplate the nature of God. We might contemplate our relationship with God and our place in this world. We might contemplate some philosophical

point. We might contemplate a problem and use discernment to see through it to the solution. Contemplation is the process of examining something with the gentle intention of wanting to know the truth about it. It was through contemplation that the great seers experienced truth. It is through contemplation that we can also experience truth.

For Persons Who Are More Involved with Yoga Practices

Your routine would be more complete because you are exercising the inner person and working with energy flows. You might do this:

1. Before meditating do some Hatha Yoga poses or some light exercises. Do some gentle breathing exercises such as alternate nostril breathing to balance the prana (vital force) in your system.

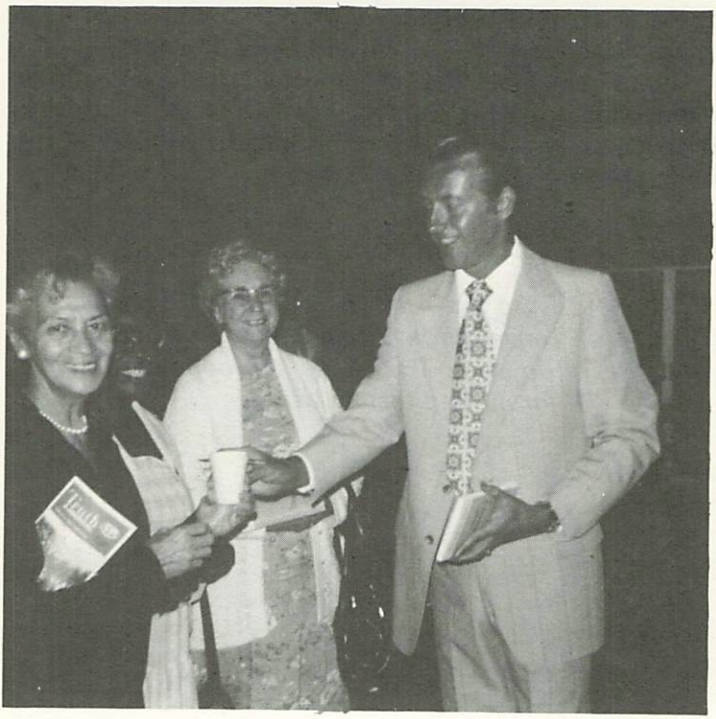
2. Enter meditation by praying to God and becoming settled. Then practice Kriya Yoga pranayama and flow into meditation. After a while, if you begin to come out of meditation but would rather extend your practice, look into the inner light and listen to the inner sound. You might do this after Kriya Yoga pranayama quite naturally, or you might spend some time in the intentional practice of working with the inner light and sound. An easy way to work with inner light and sound is to assume that your mantra is emanating from the crown chakra, and just be aware here and be conscious of whatever is perceived.

Mantra meditation and the use of Kriya Yoga pranayama works on deeper levels. Over a period of time stress will be released from the nervous system, and this will result in more available energy and greater creative expression in your life. At the deeper level, at the level of the subtle body, prana flows through channels referred to as *nadis*. These are not the nerves of the physical body: these are part of the subtle body which interpenetrates the physical body. Once kundalini is moved, then prana-shakti (creative vital force) moves all of the time at deeper levels.

Sometimes it moves with gentle action and sometimes it moves with greater intensity. There is an intelligence which directs the circulation of this subtle force, and this intelligence knows how much force to allow in the flow of the force. Eventual results are better health, increased energy, mental clarity, peace of mind, and a sense of unity with nature. More information regarding meditation methods and the activity of subtle prana is to be found in our book *Yoga Darsana: The Philosophy and Light of Yoga.*

Let us remember that as important as our meditation practices are, of equal importance is our ability to consciously and wisely use our mind and to cooperate with life on all levels with a healthy attitude.

The mind I use is a part of God's mind. I regulate my inner conversation, I maintain a clear outlook on life, I do what I must do to cooperate with God's will for me and for the world.



"The past is memory, the future is yet to be experienced, today only is real to us."

Chapter 10

TODAY AND FOREVER

How is your level of awareness today? What we *are* today, we will be forever unless we change the condition. If we are already clear and aware, possessed of understanding and in harmony with life, this will be our experience forever.

Paramahansa Yogananda was once asked if there is an end to unfoldment on the spiritual path. He replied, "No end . . . until we reach endlessness." While in the relative worlds the possibilities of perception and experience are without end. When we transcend the world our experience is that of *Being*. It is possible, the great masters say, to inwardly be established in *Being* even while outwardly relating to the world. We then perceive change but we change not.

Some, drawing upon memories of the past, will ask if this experience is not boring. No, it is not boring . . . it is the supreme enrichment of the soul. It is liberation of consciousness.

Almost twenty centuries ago a spirit took flesh and became known to history as Jesus the Christ. He proclaimed the availability of the Kingdom of Heaven, as a level of awareness possible to be experienced by anyone who would look in the right direction. He taught a simple

message . . . repent (go back to the Source within you) . . . forgive, and you will be forgiven . . . and the importance of being "born again." When we are in mortal consciousness (conditioned mind awareness) we are in need of awakening, we are in need of a spiritual birth. When this occurs in the individual, Christ Consciousness emerges and takes total dominion of our lives.

When "the Word becomes flesh," Consciousness identifies with matter (energy of God formed). Not all are aware of the fact that all there is, is God. God's energy forms as the worlds . . . and God's vitality nourishes the world . . . and God's intelligence guides the world process. God's intelligence is Christ Consciousness. As we are made in the image and likeness of God we possess within us the Christ Consciousness. When It emerges all is made new in our lives. This is the mystery hidden through the ages . . . "Christ in you, the hope of glory." And, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" indeed. To acknowledge that spirit who became known to the world as Jesus is useful. To acknowledge the Christ nature within ourselves is to fully express the message God reveals through his special agents, the supremely enlightened beings who visit the planet from time to time.

Getting the Story Straight

The process of accepting our essential divinity is simple . . . but we often make it difficult for ourselves. Why do we contribute to our own pain? Why cannot we see the obvious? The answer is found in the scriptures . . . when the mind is deluded men cannot comprehend the simple truth. We may want to comprehend, but we cannot. This is why we recommend self-examination and meditation. Self-examination helps us to get straight with ourselves and meditation affords us the opportunity to get free from restricting thoughts and feelings. We sometimes ask, "Where is God? I want to know God." God is all around us as the world and as all there is in the world. God is right

within us, at the level of soul awareness. Getting straight on this is of vital importance.

Cleaning up our mind (attitudes and beliefs) and clearing our emotional life is also necessary. Are we holding onto thoughts and beliefs that we know are self-destructive? Are we punishing ourselves with guilt feelings . . . and with resentment . . . self-doubt . . . and a host of other non-useful feelings and attitudes? Are we playing the game of, "I am so confused!"? Do we blame the past for what is presently unfolding? What is in our personal world now is just what is in our personal world. We can accept it . . . or we can change our attitudes and see change in the personal environment. It is always up to us.

Are we clear on the matter of relationships with others? Open and honest? Clear as to personal motives? Do we know we relate as we do? For that matter, do we really know why we do anything?

Straight thinking and calm self-awareness is essential if we are to be fulfilled, creative and happy. Is it all right for us to be happy? If we are not happy, what prevents happiness?

We have the most wonderful opportunity before us . . . that of awakening from the sleep of conditioned mind and being totally aware and free. Sages have shared their insight with us. We know the way. All that remains, for many, is to say "yes" to Life. Needed change occurs automatically after that. We might ask ourselves a question: "What will it be like to be free?" Also, "What would I do if I were free?"

Self-Awareness and Being

Our awareness of Self (soul, true nature) is the most important matter of all because when we are aware of who and what we are, in a soul-sense, we are at peace and we relate to the world with intelligence. To experience Self-realization is to confer upon the world the highest gift of all. This is the gift Jesus offered: his clear consciousness.

Teaching and example are, of course, necessary and useful . . . but the presence in the world of truly enlightened men and women introduces divine qualities into the planetary sphere and into the universal collective consciousness. The combined mental atmosphere of all people on the planet has an influence on individuals. When this mental atmosphere is cleansed then individuals are pushed ahead on their evolutionary path. There are enlightened individuals who are unknown to the world at large, whose presence blesses the world.

One sage, who never traveled from his community, was once asked, "Why don't you go forth and help the world?" He said, "How do you know I am not helping the world?" Talking can educate, inspire and motivate . . . but to introduce our clear consciousness into the mind of another is the greatest blessing. The One Life is transmitted to people often through another person. The One Life also, at times, awakens from within a person; either when the soul is ready for the experience or when some crisis has to be met.

A teacher once said, "When you are in a corner you have to make a decision." Sometimes it seems we are so "comfortable" that there is no present demand to awaken. I think the best crisis of all is to be cornered by God so that we cannot get away and we have to respond in the affirmative.

It is out of our awareness of *being* that we are able to do and to have. If I can *be* the person (in attitude and knowing) I need to be in order to do a job . . . I can do the job and experience the results of such performance. So can you! What is your attitude? Are you *being* the person you want to be . . . or are you thinking in terms of: "When I get what I want, then I'll be the person I want to be." I recently saw a poster with a photograph of a very plain looking mule. The caption read: "I'm not doing as well as could be expected, but then I never really expected to." If you are not, now, *being* the person you want to be . . . are you, at least, *expecting* to be?

You know the law of correspondences . . . as we are, so we experience. This is the law of life. If we have a health consciousness we will be healthy, if we have a prosperity consciousness we will be prosperous, if we are self-fulfilled we will experience fulfillment in relationships. The understanding and application of this principle makes man the master of his destiny. I know, we fulfill our destiny in partnership with God; but if we are not open to God's influence in our lives then God cannot use us fully.

One saint experienced God-realization through simple prayer. His prayer? "God, I yearn to know you." Relaxed yearning . . . along with willingness . . . results in soul awakening and God-knowledge. This is certain.

It is true that "I can do all things, with God who supports me." Life wants to work through us. That is, evolution, God's influence on nature, is pressing to express through each and every person. But, in the beginning, barring a major conversion experience, most of us have to put our spiritual affairs in order and do what we can to be receptive and responsive. Sometimes we say, "I know what I should do but I can't bring myself to do it!" We need then to learn to be responsive. When we receive inner guidance it is a certainty that we also receive the inner strength to follow that guidance. Where does our strength come from anyway? It comes from the Source and the Source is within us. God has assumed the point of view of each person on earth and God is actually playing all the roles. God is not always fully conscious in everything or every person . . . but God can and will awaken in everything and every person. This is the long-range evolutionary plan and it is to that destiny we are moving.

God is looking through our eyes, working through our hands, sensing through our senses and loving through our love. We can be fully aware of this happening. God is willing to see purely through our eyes, work wisely through our hands, sense beauty through our senses and love truly through our love.

The world is full of miracles. We see them when we

examine the fabric of nature and observe the trends of time. How glorious is the handiwork of God in the universe! The very thought of this gives us pause . . . and courage . . . and peace. We can trust the activity of God. This is all we can really trust. God formed the worlds and through His own intelligence, Christ Consciousness, is directing the orderly unfoldment of nature. This is a marvelous thing to contemplate. Sit alone sometime and contemplate God and God as the world process. Such contemplation will awaken the soul memory, the deep inner awareness we have of our true nature and of our intimate relationship to God.

Today is real because today is unfolding. Forever in time and space, until I transcend both time and space, I will acknowledge the reality of life expressing.

"It is natural to be enlightened. It is natural to be in health. It is natural to be fulfilled."

Chapter 11

GOD, THE ONLY DOER IN THIS WORLD

Why is it that we sometimes become overstressed, upset and tired of relating to the things of the world? Why is it we take everything so personally? Why is it that we sometimes despair of the future and, in a feeble attempt to obtain a measure of inner peace . . . formulate and try to really believe in a fanstasy-philosophy?

The single answer is, of course, *we forget that God alone is the doer in this world and that we are but co-workers in God's plan.* All great spiritual teachers insist that we do the best we can and make the most of talent and opportunity because this, rightly understood, contributes to soul unfoldment. Such teachers also remind us that anything useful that unfolds is due to God's grace. Without the substance of God there would be no world at all . . . and without the activity of God there would be no activity. God-energy forms as things and God-life animates all that expresses vitality. Further, any activity (and any cause that produces an effect), if not useful to the enlightenment of souls and the upward trend of nature is, in the long run, wasted.

We can "survive" for decades, keeping body and soul together. But, if we have not contributed anything useful or if we have not learned, even from seeming mistakes, our

time on earth has been wasted. Most people are aware of this fact, on a deeper level . . . when they allow themselves to be aware of it. This awareness is the cause of religious interest (*religion*, from the root meaning, is that which "binds" one to God). This awareness is also the cause of despair and depression for many who are outwardly successful but inwardly conscious that outward "success" is sometimes the result of a strong ego-drive and the effect of overly compensating for subconscious feelings of weakness and a sense of being inept and/or unworthy. Many prominent persons live private lives of quiet fear and a sense of failure. Many persons in the mainstream of society hide from the inner self-awareness by being overly involved in family relationships, job interests and community ties. Others lose themselves in frantic activity or a steady diet of social contacts. Almost everyone is involved in doing something to make life meaningful. There is a reason for this, too. We inwardly sense that life must have meaning and purpose. When we try to satisfy this yearning in peer-group involvements we experience, sooner or later (if we are self-honest) that we are looking in the wrong direction for true satisfaction. The line, "Everyone is doing it!" is not acceptable to the soul nature. What almost everyone is doing is looking for fulfillment of desire, satisfaction of ego needs or a calming of the sense urges (unless of course, "everyone" in our circle happens to be God centered and soul aware).

On Being Blind, Mechanical and Unaware

Jesus mentioned the futility of the (spiritually) blind trying to lead the equally blind. That was the essence of his phrase when he asked, "Can the blind lead the blind?" To be spiritually blind means to be deluded and lacking in true powers of discernment. To be mechanical means to be moving through life according to the dictates of subconscious needs and urges. To be unaware means to "not be conscious" and clearly perceptive.

Everyone who is not enlightened is, to some extent, deluded. It is not a crime to be deluded for without delusion we would not even be able to work through mind and body . . . unless we are completely conscious and chose to do so for a purpose. Few are in this latter category . . . most people live out their lives in relationship to their body-mind conditionings. The mind is conditioned with a multitude of past impressions. The body is likewise conditioned. When the soul fully identifies with the mind and body it has to work through the conditionings of mind and body . . . until the conditionings are removed or until the soul awakens. Identification with the conditionings of mind and body gives rise to the belief of independent existence . . . the feeling that one is separate from the Source (God). One sage has said that the deeper reason for the sense of sadness and unhappiness in people is the deep inner knowing that all effort to be fulfilled, as a result of outer endeavor, is doomed to failure. The explanation is:

There is no individual person . . . and there is no firm outer universe.

What seems to be a person is Supreme Consciousness assuming the point of view of looking out upon the world through a conditioned mind. The ego, the sense of independent existence, is due to false identification with matter. The personality, therefore, is but a temporary appearance and will not persist forever. When one tries to experience personality-fulfillment, no matter how completely one seems to succeed, that which is experienced will one day fade away. Since personality is not permanent, personality experience cannot be permanent. *We say there is no individual person because that which seems to be an individual person is but Supreme Consciousness playing a temporary role in time and space.*

All human concern with past and future and with other times and other spaces . . . and with reincarnation . . . and karma . . . has to do with the mistaken conclusion that we are individuals in relationship to outer appear-

ances. There can be no real sense of personal pride (or even a sense of unworthiness) when we know the truth that we are Pure Consciousness assuming a point of view and playing a role in the cosmic drama.

We say there is *no firm outer universe* because what appears as the universe is ever-changing energy in a process of forever-becoming. (Samsara). Everything is temporary . . . relationships, institutions, forms, bodies, etc. "Heaven and earth will pass away." Even the subtle heavens are part of the manifesting process and could not exist without illusory qualities. I agree that it is more enjoyable to live in heaven (fulfillment and understanding) than to live in hell (confusion and pain) but both are relative conditions . . . this side of the Transcendental experience of pure being. The cause of the *seeming* firm outer universe is due to the interaction of energies . . . which makes possible matter, time and space. Space is that in which things occur. Time is also relative but is determined by the sequence of events. At the Transcendental level neither time nor space exist . . . nor does energy. The Transcendental field is the *source* of power and the source of all. According to the seers only clear insight into the nature of Consciousness (the Transcendental aspect and the manifesting aspect) gives soul satisfaction; otherwise, one is bound to forever try to figure things out from a limited level of understanding. How can one arrive at the correct solution to a problem if one does not have all available data at hand? If one has all available data and can reason in a clear manner then the solution can be known. Or, if one consciously takes leave of his mind and uses discrimination (or intuition) one can know the ultimate truth. Discrimination enables us to tell what is so in relationship to that which is not so. Intuition enables us to know by knowing. What is so is the truth about a given subject; what is not so seems to be the truth but is not. We make a mistake if we try too hard to understand the truth about life . . . because, deep within us, we already know the truth. If we did not know the truth we could not recognize it when finally perceived.

The most subtle secret to be comprehended is that, in truth, there is no person in need of enlightenment and there is nothing to overcome. In the relative human experience it seems that a person is in need of awakening, improved health, better relationships and ever-more prosperity. All real seeming personal improvement is always directly related to the degree of soul awareness. All truly spiritual work (with others) is but reminding others of the basic truth of life.

Something to contemplate

To contemplate is to turn one's attention to a given subject with the intention (and willingness) to know the truth about that subject. This is what occurs during the final stages of meditation. Since I am not body, mind or personality . . . it is useless for me to try to recall past body-experiences (so-called other lifetimes). Whatever role I played before this current role is of little consequence. It was just another role. Just as the role I played twenty or thirty years ago was a role. I may have the memory of the role I played (with the satisfactions, pains, experiences, etc.) but all that remains is memory . . . an impression in the mind that can be restimulated or recalled. What I am . . . and what you are . . . is Pure Consciousness. Mind and body . . . both are extensions of Consciousness. Therefore, Consciousness is superior (and in command) to mind and body. When we live from this inner understanding we can never have any problems. When we live from the surface we can have problems. The first step in solving a problem, then, is to get back to the correct point of view and work from this understanding.

I know I am a viewpoint of God.

"God is forever conscious and forever free. We are naturally inclined to conscious awareness."

Chapter 12

ENLIGHTENMENT AS A NATURAL CONDITION

The word *enlightenment* is being used with increasing frequency. We hear of enlightenment traditions, enlightenment intensives, enlightenment methods and techniques. We hear of enlightened teachers, persons who are seeking enlightenment and the enlightenment experience itself. Just what are we talking about when we refer to enlightenment? What are the signs of enlightenment? Do we know when we are enlightened?

To be enlightened is to be consciously aware and to be possessed of knowledge. We are here referring to the knowledge of the nature of consciousness. One may be informed of relative matters and be said to be enlightened about such matters. Here, however, we are emphasizing enlightenment relative to soul understanding, understanding the nature of God and understanding the workings of consciousness as nature. This is the enlightenment experience which results in spiritual freedom.

We know when we know. We do not have to ask anyone's opinion about our own knowing. If we know, we know. Some feel that they know, some think that they know and some presume to know. Feeling, thinking and presuming are not knowing. If we are unconscious even to a small degree, we do not know. Shankara, the genius-seer of the eighth century, wrote, "Knowledge alone liberates."

He was not referring to mental reserve of data, he was referring to true insight. From what is a person liberated as a result of the enlightenment experience? A person is liberated from unknowing, from concepts and from opinions. Knowledge is the result of either discernment or experience, the ends are the same regardless of the path taken.

The discernment path is the path of calm examination of the problem before us. Whenever we are faced with needing answers about that which is being examined we have a problem. By contemplating a problem and being open to the solution the insight dawns in the conscious level of the mind. The experience path is the way of so fully merging with the subject that we gain insight as a result of conscious identification. When we are the subject and we are conscious, we know that which is so about the subject. But, more of this later in the text.

We are liberated when we are conscious and when we are free of mental confusion, emotional conflict and any and all that might restrict our creative function as a free spirit. To know the nature of the soul, our essential nature, is to be able to understand the nature of God. One who is bound by traditional thinking patterns cannot possibly understand the true nature of God. Self-realization precedes God-realization. We are identical in our nature to God. We, therefore, have all of the characteristics that God has. When we clearly see who and what we are, we can clearly comprehend what God is. This is the "mystery hid from the ages" and the insight we experience when we are truly enlightened. When the intelligence of the soul is unveiled, then we know the truth about ourselves, the truth about God and the truth about the nature of the world.

An enlightened person is a natural person. An enlightened person is not strange, weird, pious, or different for the sake of being different. An enlightened person is a natural person who is possessed of clear understanding and who flows with the currents of nature. An enlightened person does not struggle through life, is not problem-

centered, confused, frightened, or bewildered. An enlightened person is happy. Not that externals cause happiness but that soul awareness results in happiness of a settled nature. An enlightened person is simple. An enlightened person is uncomplicated. Such a one may be involved in the most intense and exacting activity and may enjoy a variety of useful relationships, but he flows with understanding from event to event, from experience to experience. An enlightened person is involved yet remains a witness to all that transpires. Events are flowing in the stream of time. An enlightened person flows with the stream and is not ruffled or disturbed.

Time is built into the fabric of this universe, as is space and the self-involvement of creative energies. Without polarity, without light particles, subtle vital force, space and time there would be no manifest universe. This is how it is with this world of lights and shadows, this universe of electrical happenings. Everything takes place in the mind of God, and we are participants in the cosmic project. Isn't this an interesting point of view? Isn't it fun to examine the process? Isn't it reassuring to know that everything is an out-picturing on the screen of space-time of an original intent? Before the worlds were, God existed. Before God was manifested, pure consciousness was, and is. We can, as did Jesus during his quiet hours, return our attention to the "bosom of the Father" and find perfect rest in our soul. Jesus often talked about the obvious; there is no rest in the "world," but there is rest in God. By this he meant that if one is depending upon outer support, one is sure to be let down, sometime. On the other hand, if one rests in the understanding of *what is so*, the truth, then one has peace of mind as a result of clear understanding.

To be enlightened is to be free of all that formerly restricted us. If the body restricts, because of illness or malfunction, we are not free. Disease can be cured, inherited tendencies can be neutralized, body moods can be handled and dissolved, emotional conflicts can be banished, mental confusion can be cleared. The innate intel-

ligence of the soul knows how to restore health and function when given the opportunity. An enlightened person moves in harmony with the energies in nature, understanding them and cooperating with them.

One cannot change the condition into which human birth was taken. What was is what was. From the present moment onward, however, we can determine much. One philosophical view is that we can accept the hand which life has dealt us and play it out the best we can. Regret is useless for one whose goal is enlightenment. It does not help our cause to blame the past, others or circumstances. The most useful step we can take is to accept the challenge of being responsible from this present moment. We experienced what we experienced because of our then level of awareness. What we experience in the future will be, line for line and point for point, in accord with our present and future level of awareness. This is the law of mind and consciousness.

The enlightenment experience is possible at any moment. Some teach that spiritual growth is a matter of incarnations of struggle and learning. Enlightenment teachers explain that we awaken from unknowing to knowing, and when we become conscious we see clearly and understand everything. The material universe is undergoing evolutionary change as a result of emerging consciousness. Souls which are identified with matter experience gradual awakening, in harmony with evolutionary trends. Souls which awaken and experience enlightenment may elect to participate with the evolutionary process but they do so with full awareness.

The enlightenment experience has been referred to in various terms by different people who have experienced partial or full consciousness. St. Paul referred to the liberating experience of being "in Christ"; Jesus referred to the Kingdom of Heaven as a possible experience even while embodied; illumination is often used to characterize the enlightenment experience; and cosmic consciousness is another term often used. Yogis refer to *samadhi* and those

of the Zen tradition speak of *satori*. One thing is obvious, people have had the enlightenment experience to varying degrees. To some it comes in a flash of insight, during which cosmic understanding is had, then the insight dims over the years, but the memory remains. Some experience permanent awakening and are able to live from that level of understanding from that moment onward. A flash of insight is proof that such an experience is possible. Permanent enlightenment results in conscious immortality.

Some people, upon awakening to the truth of their own nature, continue a routine life but with insight and fresh perception. Others become leaders and teachers and show the way to others by precept and example. What occurs after the enlightenment experience will be in line with soul destiny, for an enlightened person is no longer driven by whims or subconscious compulsions. We might say that whatever one does after enlightenment is experienced is due to the will of God. That is, the evolutionary intention finds through the enlightened person an open and responsive viewpoint of Itself through which to fulfill the purpose of evolution.

I am a Life-giving spirit. I am conscious of my real nature and I flow with the natural order with ease and understanding.

"God is forever and ever. We, as viewpoints of God, are forever and ever."

Chapter 13

YES, WE LIVE FOREVER!

As a viewpoint of supreme consciousness we play our role in relationship to events and appearances in this relative world. We are immortal beings but not all who play their present role are conscious of who and what they are or why they do what they do. It is interesting to be aware of the fact that we cannot possibly die or cease to be. We can experience altered states of consciousness, we can be conscious (truly awake) or unconscious (asleep), we can experience degrees of consciousness between wakefulness and unconsciousness. We can play a variety of roles. We can identify with a body and we can break identification with a body; this is known as birth and death.

Our true home is inner space. We emerged to the surface of this present world after having passed through levels of subtle material matter. Every level of relative manifestation is material substance; subtle matter precedes gross matter but it is all material substance. Remember, there is only one substance from which everything comes and with which everything is formed.

Our true nature is pure consciousness. When we assumed our present point of view we identified with

subtle matter and mind. This resulted in our forgetting the real nature. We came to earth (identified with nature) and forgot heaven. There is no cause for regret, however, for we are here because we are part of a grand process. Some souls are here because they are playing a role in the regeneration of the world. Some souls are here because they are "fallen angels"; that is, they enjoyed freedom in subtle spheres but became dull and emerged into the gross sphere we call our world. Some souls came intentionally, to assist the evolutionary process, some didn't have to come here but they lost their way, some souls became involved with nature eons ago as unconscious participants and are working their way out of identification with the material universe. There is no question of good souls and bad souls and no question of powers of light in contest with powers of darkness. We are merely looking at what is. Nearly enlightened souls are almost clear and souls in confusion are not yet conscious. Considering the multiplied billions of souls and the complexity of the evolutionary process it is quite reasonable that things should be as they are. With involution souls were carried into unconscious identification with matter. The world is made possible due to the interaction of unconscious matter and conscious evolutionary intent. Life is present even in inanimate material and when life recedes from matter then matter decays. The life principle is of major importance because it is the life principle which animates form. Form (things) is made up of unconscious energy; although there are universes expressing at the atomic level of matter. The intelligence of God drives the universe. The material universe is made possible by the intelligence of God but matter is not self-conscious and, therefore, has no self-determinism. Matter is regulated by the intelligence which pervades everything.

The majority of people yearn for immortality. Some people are weary of this world because they do not know how to cope and they are tired. A few are weary because they no longer see any reason to play the game of life in

our present time-space environment; if they are truly conscious their world-weariness means they are destined to transcend this world. Some people have a hope of heaven, a possible future experience where things will be more close to the ideal. Others, who have no understanding of what lies before them and who do not accept the idea of a heaven world, think in terms of living forever as a physical body. Such people try, through diet, mental attitude, conditioning the subconscious level of mind—whatever seems workable—to prove the principle of forever life as a body. They always fail. Sooner or later the moment comes when they must face the test of exiting the physical form. There are those, so tradition has it, who live for centuries and who know the secret of renewing the body. These souls are known as mortal-immortals and they serve a conscious purpose of assisting this earth's evolution. But they know their purpose and they also know how to shift their point of view in order to be aware in other times and other spaces. They are not limited to this earth experience.

Is the doctrine of reincarnation true? Yes, for souls who are identified with the material universe reincarnation is true. We always gravitate into the environment which best suits our need for expression. If we are not clear enough to dwell in subtle realms we are drawn back to this one after a suitable duration of rest in astral spheres. If we are clear enough then we continue our conscious experience, after this world, into subtle realms or we transcend all spheres completely. Or, knowing the truth about the nature of consciousness and having a soul destiny with this world, we return willingly to this plane and continue our work. Reincarnation is true for souls who are not fully conscious. For souls which are conscious it is only a matter of identification, not a matter of entering into a body. From the overview, there is no reincarnation because one life is playing all of the roles and the one life is manifesting as various forms, so it is a drama enacted by the master playwright and it only seems that reincarnation is so and it only seems that evolution is in process.

The Soul and Its Involvement With the Material World

The soul is defined as a ray or viewpoint of pure consciousness which is reflecting in the intelligence aspect of the human mind. This is the soul's involvement with the material world and further involvement results. The soul takes on coverings or sheaths as it enters into identification with the manifest realms. Ancient texts describe these coverings as follows. First is the subtle covering as a result of identifying with the basic fabric or substance of nature at the fine level. This results in unknowingness and identification with creative energy, light particles, time and space. Second is the magnetic-aura electricities, manifestations of the seat of intelligence. Third is the organ known as the mind, containing root causes of the senses. Fourth is the body of life composed of subtle organs of action. The fifth is the physical body. These sheaths are interrelated when we are working through the physical body. There are corresponding spheres which exist behind this gross world and the soul is able to express in these spheres according to the sheath identified with at the time. For instance, if one were to leave the physical body at transition and still be identified with the astral sheath composed of vital force, one would dwell in one of the many astral spheres. Or, one might withdraw from the astral sheath as well as the physical sheath and dwell in mental realms. Or, one might transcend mental realms and dwell in celestial realms, just this side of the reality of God. If one is conscious at transition one becomes aware of the sphere which corresponds to his level of understanding. If one is not conscious at transition one moves into a subtle sphere and sleeps for a while, to rest. Then one might awaken to the awareness of the sphere being experienced or one might awaken here on earth in a new physical body.

We are tied to the material universe because of interest, because of soul destiny or because of subconscious needs. Subconscious needs refer to the karmic condition, the

desires, urges and complex patterns at the subconscious level of mind. The average person, being identified with the mind, is driven by the urges to fulfill desire. Subconscious patterns can be neutralized either through self-examination and understanding or by experiencing fulfillment of desire. When we learn to meditate correctly we turn attention and vital force back from the senses to the origin of life within us and this also neutralizes by allowing us the experience of self-satisfaction without the need for sensory input or gratification of desire. When we learn to rest in this soul-satisfied experience we recognize that superior fulfillment lies within and there is no compulsive need to look outside of ourselves. We can still live in this world and relate to the world through the senses. We can enjoy but we are not victimized by strong needs. Many people are driven by the desire to experience pleasure or to avoid pain. An enlightened person lives freely, enjoys life, but is not driven by the urges common to unenlightened people. One who does not understand this might say that an enlightened person is not quite normal. This is true. Such a one is natural, appropriate and forever conscious of what he experiences, what he perceives and why he does what he does.

How to Prepare for the Future

The best way to prepare for the future is to live today in the ideal manner. When we live for the moment with understanding we are sure to be able to consciously and appropriately experience future moments. When we live for the moment with understanding we are making a major contribution to this world, for it means that one less person is contributing to the confusion of the world. An enlightened person does not immediately leave this world or even lose interest in the world process. An enlightened person fully participates but his motives are different; he consciously engages in natural and creative activity in harmony with the evolutionary pattern. Wherever we do our

work, at whatever level of society, if we do what we are able to do to make the greatest contribution to the awakening of souls, we are doing our unique duty. Do not think that enlightened people must wear a "spiritual" facade. To be natural is to be true to the inner nature, to be uncomplicated and always in harmony with life.

We already know how to think, how to feel, how to act wisely, how to meditate, how to take care of the body and how to relate to others. Knowing these things must be followed by actually doing what is correct. Whenever we know better but do not do better we can be sure that some deepseated pattern is controlling us. We can rise free of these controlling tendencies if we will but decide to do so and make the necessary adjustment in attitude. A little practice will prove to one that it is easy to adjust the attitude. We can practice doing this; we can be optimistic or we can be negative in outlook, we can be happy or we can be sad, we can be mentally clear or we can be confused, we can be emotionally distraught or we can be calm and clear, we can be goal oriented or we can be beset with problems. This inner adjustment has nothing to do with externals. If we say we are in a certain state of mind because of externals we are allowing ourselves to be the effect of the outer; we are saying that we have no control, no will, no self-determinism. We are free to the degree that we can objectively handle the contents of the subconscious level of mind and to the degree that we can remain steady in soul-understanding.

I want to emphasize this point that we are in control of our own outlook on life. The key here is to take responsibility. One who is not responsible blames externals, other people, forces of nature or the unknown contents of the mind. One who is responsible blames no one and no thing, learns to flow with the forces of nature and learns to handle the contents of the subconscious.

We are in control of our actions. If we do not regulate our activities we are slaves of habit. How conscious are we moment to moment throughout the day? Do we do things

with clear intention? Do we experience what is happening with full attention? Do we schedule our time wisely, or do we affirm that we just cannot find time to do the things we ought to do? Do we handle our money wisely or do we affirm that although there is plenty of money it does not seem to go far enough? Do we allow others to take our time and waste our time when we know better but have not the courage or the will to be in charge? And, do we take time to be kind, patient and understanding when someone needs our full and creative attention? Today, this moment, is our occasion to live from the clear level of understanding and this can be experienced if we learn to be conscious enough, if we learn to be responsible for the opportunity of living from the correct point of view. It does not take years of study, meditation or effort to live from the correct point of view. All it takes is the decision to make the transition in viewpoint and the responsibility to handle whatever is experienced as a result.

Yoga breathing, for instance, can result in a change of mental attitude, because the brain, the organ of the mind, is influenced by a change in body chemistry. Diet can work a useful influence, also. The use of mantra or devotional chanting and singing can alter the state of consciousness. Exercise which improves blood circulation can improve our mental outlook. A vacation can work wonders, just getting away from accustomed circumstances, so we can rest and become objective. Being identified with the body and our earth environment we can experience a change in mood and viewpoint as a result of change in our environment. I feel it useful to take advantage of every aid at our command in order to be clear and more aware. I would suggest that one do whatever proves useful while not depending totally upon external aids. Never let us forget that when we live from the level of soul-understanding that this is superior to all else. Yet, it would be a mistake to ignore practical aids and practical methods. Some persons, new on the path, try to command their world through will and understanding alone, before they truly

know how to live from the correct point of view. Theirs can be a struggle to prove supremacy. An enlightened person is never concerned with proving anything to anyone. To do so would be evidence of strong ego and personality involvement. Ego and personality-games never concern a conscious being.

An Exercise to Awaken the Soul Nature

When going to sleep at night or when taking a nap, do this: watch the process as you drift into sleep. Try not to prevent the process, merely observe yourself and the process. With gentle practice you will learn to be consciously aware at the various levels. You will begin to see dreams occur. You will pass through dreams to a deeper level of inner awareness. You will sometimes go to sleep without even noticing the transition phases. No matter what is perceived or experienced, it will be a useful exercise. In due time you will become partially conscious while sleeping, restful but inwardly alert. This can be a creative experience: the occasion for inner self-examination, inner review of thoughts and feelings, goal setting time, decision making time, an occasion for increased awareness of what is true about this universe. This exercise will provide the opportunity of clearly understanding who you are and what your relationship with God and the world really is. When we rest at the transition phases of awareness (between waking and sleep stages) we have the chance to see in between the spaces between phases and between thoughts to what is real when phases and thoughts no longer intervene.

Life is all there is. Life does not begin and life does not end. Appearances change but the inner Reality changes not.

"Ye have not chosen me, but
I have chosen you, and
ordained you, that ye should
go and bring forth fruit."
- Jesus

Chapter 14

THE CHALLENGE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Of all the possible themes we can examine relative to the spiritual path, the matter of discipleship seems to bring forth the most questions. Let us see whether or not we can clear this subject once and for all, to the total satisfaction of each reader. I will explain the matter as directly as possible and will request of you to examine what I share in the light of awakened intelligence.

Just Who is a Disciple?

A disciple is a person who is willing to do whatever is necessary to clear the mind and consciousness of all that prevents the free flow of soul awareness. A disciple is a person who is concerned with total understanding in this life-cycle, whose desire is to have the enlightenment experience. One who is not willing to do whatever is necessary to clear mind and consciousness cannot rightly be called a disciple. Such a one may be a seeker, a student, or one who is curious about life, but, without willingness to do what must be done, the matter of discipleship is out of the question. A disciple must be willing to release opinions, theories and all self-protective mechanisms in his personality. Relative to truth (that which is so about life)

opinions are worthless. Whatever we do to protect our conditioned personality is a barrier to discovery. Too many truth students want understanding on their terms. They may assert, "I want understanding but I don't want to change." How can this be? Some want a little understanding with which to mix with their already confused understanding. They want to put new wine in old containers. They want to be the personality-me while being able to use some of the soul abilities to extend their influence. A true disciple comes to God with the attitude of surrender and respect, with reverence, and an open mind and heart. A true disciple begins with the request, "I know that I know nothing. Reveal to me the innermost secrets of life." With this attitude progress is possible. The veil can be lifted and the light experienced.

Who Is It That Reveals the Light?

It is the intelligence of God that runs everything in the universe. It is the intelligence of God emerging from the depths of the soul that truly reveals the light of truth. The intelligence of God as the Oversoul is identical to the intelligence of God as the particular viewpoint we refer to as the individual soul. If one can surrender to the intelligence of God then one is a disciple. All guidance will come from within or it will be revealed in outer opportunities and circumstances. Sometimes the intelligence of God communicates to us through a person, and this special person is a guru. The word comes from the Sanskrit; *gu* means darkness and *ru* means light. The guru is, then, the light that removes the darkness, the truth that banishes ignorance. Even when we have a relationship with a person who plays the role of guru, it is still the intelligence of God which is the guru. If we see the guru as a personality we miss the point entirely. The wisdom of the ages and the energy of God flows through the guru to awaken the slumbering soul and remind it of the truth.

The guru's major function is to lead the disciple's atten-

tion to the truth about life. The guru may or may not be concerned with the relative happiness of the disciple. The guru's purpose is not to assist the disciple to live a contented human existence but to encourage him to know the truth about his inner nature and his relationship to God. If one who assumes the role of guru does not show the disciple the way to God knowledge, then he has shirked his duty, his sole responsibility, and cannot rightly be referred to as a guru.

What is the Disciple's Responsibility?

The disciple's responsibility is to heed the guidance of the intelligence of God whether inwardly revealed, outwardly shown, or imparted through the instruction of the guru. God is, of course, extremely patient with us because we are extensions of Him. The greater part of God transcends the relative order of things, so there is no frantic necessity for God to "save" Himself as us. God is doing quite well just being what God is. It is only the viewpoint of God designated as us that is sometimes concerned with waking up and knowing the truth that results in freedom. Some viewpoints of God are not presently concerned with waking up, and this is all right with God too. It should also be all right with us if our friends and associates have no current inclination to experience enlightenment. Our friends may be fulfilling their intentions right on schedule even if we cannot understand their interests and involvements. When my guru accepted me as a disciple he said, "I pledge you my unconditional love, forever." God has always loved us, God loves us now, God will ever love us. It cannot be otherwise, because we are extensions of God and God has perfect self-acceptance. God cannot deny an expression of Himself any more than we can deny ourselves. To think of ourselves as unworthy of God's caring grace is an immature and blind attitude.

A true guru loves his disciple without any condition. He may not approve of some behavior or of some of the

attitudes, but he cannot help but love the light of the soul. He knows the disciple, as an extension of God, is another expression of himself. A guru, having complete self-acceptance, totally accepts the divinity of the disciple. The guru is only concerned with stripping away that which prevents the disciple from knowing the truth about himself. If a disciple resists the guru's help the guru may refuse, for a time, to teach or instruct. This does not mean that the guru ceases to work on the inner planes for the disciple's welfare, through prayer and recognition; it only means that the guru has more important things to do than to put up with personality-nonsense the disciple might want to dramatize.

A disciple's responsibility is to hearken to the instruction of the guru. A disciple might respond to instruction to change by saying, "Well, I'll try." Trying is better than not trying but usually ends up as merely trying and not succeeding. Doing what is requested is the more reasonable course of action. Many have been trying for years and they are still trying. A few learn to do and they soon become proficient in doing. It is important that a disciple hold to the inner understanding of his real nature as pure consciousness. We are not sinners trying to become saints; we are pure consciousness emerging through layers of conditioned mind so that we can shine clearly with total understanding. We are, therefore, always to hold to the inner understanding of "Pure consciousness is my never-changing nature." This will enable us to function from the level of being a divine expression instead of functioning from a level of thinking we are limited and restricted. Out of the understanding of our *being* we can then learn to *do* what needs to be done. When a guru instructs a disciple to avoid certain relationships, he does so to insulate the disciple, for the time being, from possible negative influences. When a guru instructs a disciple to read specific literature and avoid other reading matter, he is directing the disciple to study the clear teaching and avoid mental confusion. If you consider yourself a disciple, ask yourself this question:

"Do I want to experience enlightenment, or am I content to wallow in delusion?" Also, ask: "Have I given my life totally to God, or have I gone only half of the way?" A true disciple goes all of the way. He does not play games, nor does he assert that he must "do his own thing" in order to express himself. An enlightened person does only the will of God; he has no "personal thing" to do.

According to the teaching found in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we are influenced by the electric characteristics in nature. If we are influenced by inertia, we are self-centered and spiritually unawakened. If we are influenced by the action-characteristic, we tend to be restless and involved with feeling and relationships almost totally. If we are in tune with the elevating characteristic in nature, we tend toward that which is harmonious and uplifting. Far better, of course, is to be influenced by the elevating tendency in nature. Better yet is to be free of all natural influences and live out of soul awareness. Krishna advised Arjuna to be free of all influences of nature as they manifest through the mind and body and be anchored in spiritual realization.

Are We Aware of the Games We Play?

Everyone plays a game in this world. An enlightened person moves though his role consciously, fully aware of what he does and why he does it. An unaware person is not conscious of what he does or why he does it. He may have some self-understanding about his motives but he is not completely clear about them. Other people know exactly what they are doing when they play their personality-games; they do what they do because this is the way they have chosen to survive. A neurotic person may even gain feelings of delight and a sense of inner success by manipulating his environment (including other people) by his strange and unconventional behavior.

What games are you playing? Be honest now. Be truthful with yourself. Are you into the role of the avid truth

seeker who forever seeks but finds very little? Are you into the role of being poor? Are you into the role of being rich but selfish? Are you into a lonely role, a "nobody could possibly love me" role? Are you into power and manipulation? Are you into "my family is everything" role? Are you playing the role of "I'm ready to be a teacher even though I'm not clear on it yet"? What is important to you? How do you cope with life's challenges? What do you do (or fail to do) to attract attention to yourself? A little self-examination can be very useful to each of us. If life is humdrum and if you have been in a rut for some time, why are you accepting this situation?

Partially conscious people (people in conditioned awareness) learn early in life how to cope by acting out a certain script. We learn what will enable us to survive in our world, and we tend to keep on dramatizing our role because it has survival value to us. In extreme instances some people will injure the body, avoid an education, even commit a crime and go to jail in order to survive. True, some people behave in an unconventional manner because of self-dislike, but many do so in order to cope and survive. When a person agrees to be a disciple, he should let down all his defenses and stand naked before God. God knows everything, anyway, so who is fooling whom? Once we understand that God is onto us, our foolish games should be ended.

A disciple is an initiate, one who has been given access to inner understanding. More is expected of such a person because a commitment has been made, a commitment to enter fully into an intimate relationship with God in all ways. When we are in partnership with God, we hold nothing back, for our life is no longer our own. When we are in partnership with God, we know we have the full support of the power that runs the universe and that the substance of God will flow through us and around us and there is no end to it or the possible expressions of it. When we are in partnership with God, we are no longer victimized by memories of the past, fearful of what the future

might reveal, or bound in a present situation. What a glorious experience it is to move through time and space in a conscious relationship with God! An initiate stands firm in the realization of *what is* and does not react to appearances. The outer appearances are but reflections of mental concepts and the unfoldment of the evolutionary process. There is nothing to fear in this world. Appearances change but we change not. Events transpire but we stand steady and observe them with understanding and inner peace. An initiate plays his allotted role with conscious understanding, but he never sinks to the level of unconsciousness where he plays roles to manipulate others. An initiate may work through a difficult challenge, but he will not give in to it and remain in bondage. When a decision needs to be made, an initiate, a true disciple, will make one. What do we do when we are not clear in the matter of choices before us? We pray. We return to that clear place within us where we rest in the knowledge of the soul and the reality of God, knowing that from this level the right guidance will emerge.

A Disciple is Responsive

To react in an uncontrolled manner is not the way of a conscious being. The way of a conscious being is to respond according to intuition, intelligence, and common sense. Let us not underestimate common sense; this is frequently soul understanding coming to the fore. We sometimes think that guidance must come as a "revelation" accompanied by a flash of light and tremors of the body, when, in fact, guidance is often a matter of exercising sound judgment when faced with a temporary problem in this appearance-world. We refer to the world as an appearance because what we see, feel, taste, and bear witness to is but the outer expression of an inner cause. An initiate is able, with practice, to see behind the surface of things to that which is the cause of events. This is why some conscious beings can "see" into the future; they are

aware of present patterns in Universal Mind which, if not neutralized or altered, will externalize as world events.

As disciples, are we responsive to life? Do we handle whatever surfaces with understanding? Are we appropriate to every situation? Sometimes, to be appropriate means to go along quietly with whatever is unfolding. We may not want to disturb the flow. Sometimes, to be appropriate means to inject a word of wisdom without being obvious about it. To push, to try to convert, to try to save people who are doing quite well what they are doing is not only not appropriate behavior, it is just plain out of line for a conscious being. An aware person knows when to speak, when to act, and how and when to speak and act. If you are not yet fully aware, then keep the company of conscious people and be still and observant. You will learn your lessons by such companionship.

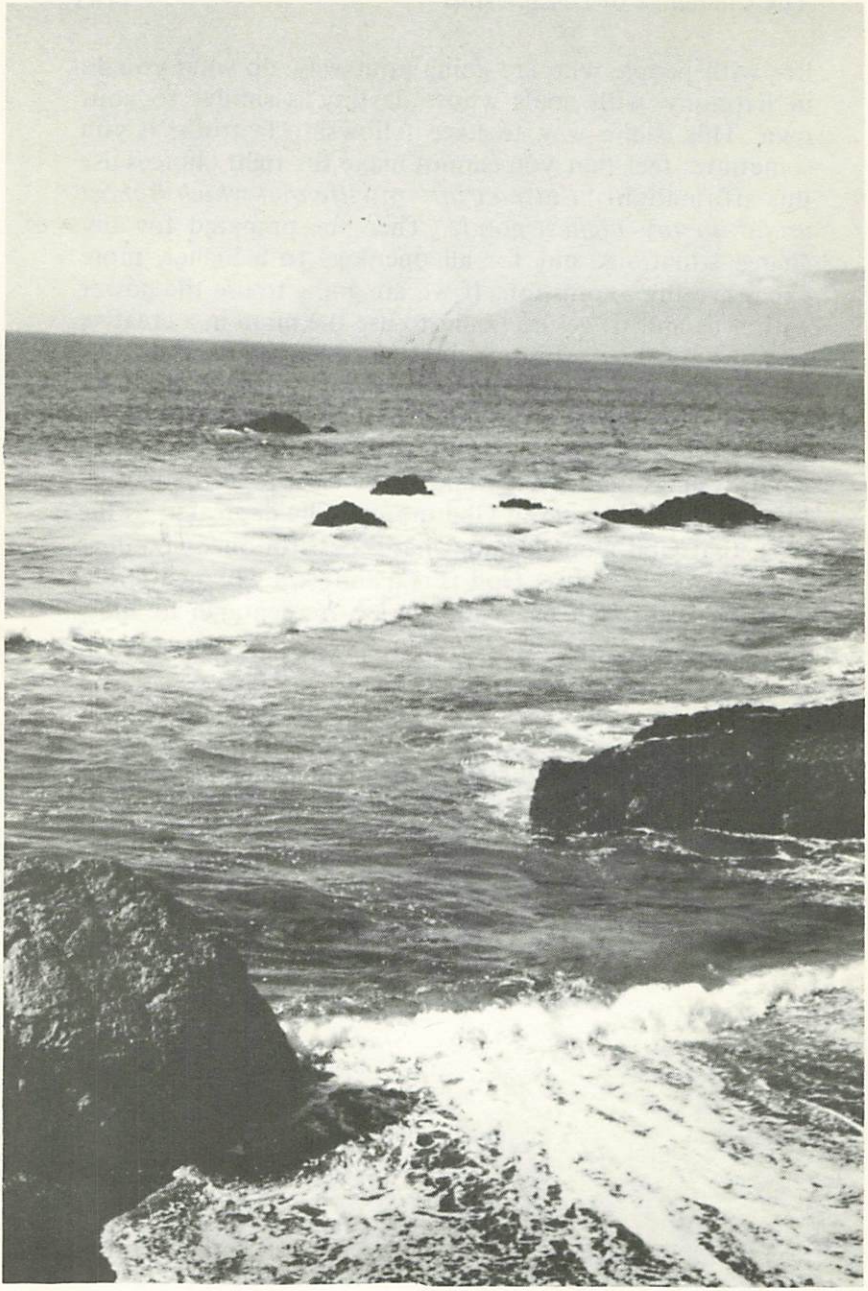
The Importance of the Company We Keep

There is a term used in India for the frequent gathering together with others on the spiritual path. The term is *Satsang* and means "fellowship in truth." An initiate, a true disciple, is always anchored in God and needs no outer support. Others who are yet striving can benefit from occasional contact with God-oriented friends. As we move through our daily routine we are often involved with good people who are not consciously interested in an intimate relationship with God. We then become confused, reactive, or caught up in the life patterns of those with whom we associate. We may then need to be reminded of what is really important to us. I am not talking about defending ourselves against "evil," I am just pointing out that there is the clear road and there is the confused road, and it is much easier (and a lot more fun) to take the clear road. To enjoy fellowship with truth-oriented people, we do not have to attend meetings; we only have to make a choice relative to with whom we live and share our lives on a day-to-day basis. Love and bless every person you meet;

live with people who are going your way, do what you do in harmony with souls whose destiny is similar to your own. This is the way to have fellowship in truth. If you sometimes feel that you cannot make the right choices use this affirmation: "*I attract into my life that which is most useful to my highest good.*" Then, be prepared for any change-situations and for all openings to a higher, more expansive life expression. If we are going to use the power within us and if we are going to use the mind in a creative way, we must be ready for the consequences. If we are not ready to handle whatever occurs, we are not true disciples.

The challenge of discipleship is that of being aware. One who is already contained in the maze of mental conditionings is not even aware of the clear road that awaits him. To be a disciple of God means to be dedicated to the ideal that God alone knows what is best for one. God does know. God does care. God is real and God will meet every condition, through us, when we are free enough to allow this to unfold.

I welcome the challenge to be a disciple of God. I understand that the true guru is the intelligence of God; however, this intelligence expresses to me at my moment of need. In me there is no ego, no need for struggle, or expression of personal power. I am totally surrendered to God.



"The changeless Reality is the Truth, the Way and the only Life."

Chapter 15

ONE TRUTH, ONE REALITY, ONE WAY TO KNOWLEDGE

In the *Gospel According to St. John* (14:6) Jesus explains to his disciples the way to liberation: "I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." To understand these words we must understand what Christ Consciousness is; Christ Consciousness is the awareness of the conscious-intelligence aspect of the soul, which is identical with the conscious-intelligence aspect of God. No man (no person identified with mind) can experience pure consciousness without experiencing Christ Consciousness first. The way to knowledge is from mental identification to superconscious awareness, which is experienced when we are mind-oriented as the light of the soul shines clearly in the mind. From superconsciousness we identify with God-as-sound current (Om, Amen), God as intelligence, and then, finally, God as pure being.

The Never Changing Truth

Truth is *that which is so* about whatever is examined. Truth is not what we only partially understand. Truth is *that which is so*. The awareness of this truth releases us from the bondage which is the result of lack of understanding. When we examine the nature of consciousness

and understand the nature of God, the divinity of the soul, and the nature of the world process, we then know the truth. We are then enlightened. If there is a shadow of unknowing in the awareness, there is no enlightenment. We do not have to ask another if we have arrived at understanding. When we know, we know. If we are not sure that we know, we do not know. When we know, we know we move easily through this world.
From the Zen tradition we quote a poem:

"Even beyond the ultimate limits there extends a passageway,
Whereby he comes back among the six realms of existence;
Every worldly affair is a Buddhist work,
And wherever he goes he finds his home air;
Like a gem he stands out even in the mud,
Like pure gold he shines even in the furnace;
Along the endless road (of birth and death) he walks sufficient unto himself,
In whatever associations he is found he moves leisurely unattached."

Upon cutting through surface teaching traditions and arriving at the core of the essential message revealed in all world scriptures, we find the same basic truth. Narrow-minded people argue about the exclusiveness of their particular religious philosophy; enlightened people understand that traditional teachings have their value for the respective followers, but they see clearly the inner message. The ideal is for one to be faithful to that tradition which is most useful and with one that is most comfortable, while allowing others the freedom to be comfortable in their chosen tradition. The seers of Vedic times taught, "Truth is one; men call it by various names." God is what God is, even though given various names. It is we who name God. God is what God has ever been and will ever be.

Can we know the ultimate truth about the nature of consciousness? Yes, we can! Every enlightened person bears witness to the truth and shares the good news that every person who seeks to know will eventually know. Some are too impatient in their quest for knowledge; some try too hard to possess total understanding in a very short time; there are others who couldn't care less about whether truth can be known or not. I am here giving my personal testimony that truth can be known. I am here inviting you to investigate for yourself and discover for yourself the liberating experience of coming into the understanding of that which is true about the nature of consciousness.

What is true about your soul nature is also true about the nature of God. The universe is perfectly reflected within you. You are to your mind and body as God is to His own mind and His own body, which we refer to as the universe. Your body and my body is a universe in itself. When we understand our nature as the dominant influence upon mind and body, we will understand the relationship of God to universal mind and the manifest universe. When we truly know who and what we are, we will also know what God is. If we conceive of ourselves as a body or a mind, we cannot clearly grasp the reality of God. Once we experience our nature as pure consciousness, we then experience the reality of God as pure consciousness, and we understand how God can extend as mind and then as the universe. We must use words and words often limit our expression. We say God has a mind and we say that we have a mind. Really, God extends as mind and we extend as that to which we refer as our mind. From mind there extends the body. We are superior to the extensions labeled mind and labeled body. There are laws of nature relative to mental and physical health, because mind and body are material and there must be harmony between material things. But, let us never forget that we are in command of mind and we are in command of the body, just as God is in command of universal mind and God is in charge of the manifest universe.

Reality is Never Changed

In truth writings we often find the word *reality* spelled as *Reality*. This designates the changeless aspect of consciousness in contrast to the ever-changing appearances (reality). That which is real is perceived through the senses and is an expression of that which is Real. When I wrote my commentary on the *Yoga Sutras* many years ago, I gave the book the title of *This Is Reality*. The title doesn't really convey the fact that the contents deal with the *Yoga Sutras*, but the title does convey my inspiration at the time of the writing of the book; I felt than that I was examining that which is Real. The title must draw a soul-response from readers, too, because this happens to be my most widely distributed book. I must confess that even I am sometimes challenged by the text when I, now and then, skim the pages. I know I wrote the book, because I recall the weeks and months of diligent involvement. I also know that the "I" of me wrote whatever is of value. When I typed the manuscript I was in a certain "space" in my own mind and I knew it would turn out well. The material was not channeled through me by some outside being; as I wrote I did so from a clear place in my own mind. Perhaps I was outside of my mind. (Being outside of one's mind is not the same as being out of one's mind.)

Allan Watts once wrote a delightful essay on the matter of being clear, and he suggested that a person might have to "go out of his mind to find himself" . . . this was Mr. Watts' way of cutting through the reader's mental conversation to strike at the core of *what is so*.

Have you ever observed your own mental conversation? Never mind the verbal talk of others, just observe how steadily your mind runs on and on and on, even when you are talking to others or busily engaged in routine duties. The mind of the average person just never stops talking. Unfortunately, too many people allow the mental nonsense to be verbalized and they either bore us to tears or they drive us into strange mental-emotional dramatiza-

tions. Of course, we can walk away from people who talk too much. We cannot walk away from ourselves when we feel trapped by our own interior conversations. Nor should we avoid being aware of interior mental conversations; what goes on in our own mind can give us a clue to self-understanding. Also, what continues in our mind can, at times, externalize as events and this-world experience. A "flash" thought has little influence upon our lives (unless such a thought is inspiration or insight into what can transpire and we accept the reality of it), but, persisting mental conversations are the end result of inner moods and give us some understanding of what really motivates us and of what is really important, at our level of understanding (or misunderstanding). Sometimes a person will become aware of strong urges and clear mental impressions and assume they are revelations to be acted upon, when, really, they are merely surface manifestations of unconscious needs seeking fulfillment. Little does the average person know about what really drives him through life. Most of the people on this planet are driven, not from soul awareness but from the confused urging of the deeper mind. The sum total of all deeper mind patterns is our karma, our forgotten memories which still surface to invade our present awareness. It is not safe (nor wise) to suppress unconscious urgings; it is far more useful to understand these urgings and either clear them (neutralize them) through understanding and release or let them be worked out through experience, if such experience will not further injure us or others with whom we associate.

Clearing the Unconscious

One way to clear the unconsciousness of desire and need is to let the inner patterns unfold. A desire will frequently be neutralized once it is fulfilled. This is not always the case, because sometimes the more we experience the more we yearn to experience because of the pleasure we feel during the fulfillment of a goal or need. Some-

times we enjoy the pleasure of human contact, the pleasure of success, the pleasure of power over our environment . . . so much that we continue our games . . . because of the good feeling that results. Most desires, however, will be neutralizaed if we fulfill them. There is no problem involved when we enjoy a game of golf, tennis, or chess . . . if we are not on a need-to-win drive. If we can enjoy the game, then this can be a useful way to expand awareness. We start the game, we play the game with total awareness, we end the game, and that is that. This can be a useful exercise. "Win" or "lose," a game is a game. A key here, for the fun of it, the more conscious one is, the less likely it is that he will lose any game. Another key is, one does not have to win by trying to win. Going with the flow of life is all that is essential. Have you noticed that couples who work at keeping their relationship intact often remain involved with keeping their relationship intact? The attitude is often, "I must not fail in this relationship!" And, if they "keep it together," they are not happy or fulfilled. If, on the other hand, both parties become clear and honest, then the relationship blossoms. Working at maintaining a status-quo situtation is a deadend effort. We sometimes forget the basics: we can start a relationship (or project); we can feed energy and attention into it, we can terminate it when it is no longer useful. God did this program when He sent forth the universe. God started the process and God is keeping things going. God will also pull the curtain down when the moment is appropriate. God is the master planner and He will not make any mistakes. If we cannot understand the ways of God, it is because we are not aware of what God really is doing. Our lack of understanding is not a problem for God. God does what is useful, always. To surrender to God's will as the world becomes transformed is an awakening experience.

The unconscious level of mind is also cleared as a result of regular meditation. Even if we are able to live day to day from a clear level of awareness, as long as there is material in the unconscious which should be handled, we

should meditate. Meditation keeps open the doors between layers of mind and allows subtle soul force to circulate throughout the mental field. This circulation of soul force will release stress from the body and filter into areas of the mind which are, for the most part, inaccessible to us. There are levels in the unconscious which we have no conscious awareness of, and these levels can be cleansed through the meditation process. Sometimes, as we meditate, we experience visions and hallucinations as a result of material floating to the surface level of mind from the unconscious level. Even if we do not experience such phenomena, if we meditate correctly on a regular basis and then live out of a state of clear understanding, the inner work continues on deeper levels. Unless patterns in the unconscious are cleared there is always the future possibility of problems arising in our lives. The patterns remaining after enlightenment is karma yet to be neutralized. As long as we identify with the mind we will carry with us the weight of karma, until it is cleared. Of course, there is always the possibility that when a soul leaves the body it will transcend all relative planes, including the mental plane; in this instance the residue of mind would be left behind with the mental sheath.

Much can be released from the unconscious level of mind merely as a result of our becoming totally conscious. When we awaken from the dream of mortality we also find that we are free of all patterns which were a part of the dream condition. When we enjoy correct self-understanding we do not have any problems. An enlightened person sees clearly that the soul is pure and has been from the beginning.

Systems, methods, and techniques are useful to the degree that one is able to experience the true nature as a result of their use.

Since the truth is *that which is so* about the nature of consciousness, there is only one truth. Since God is manifesting as all that is, as well as regulating all that is, there is only one Reality. Since it is the certain destiny of all souls

to awaken to the realization of their essential divinity, there is only one way to knowledge. Failure to see the truth, failure to acknowledge Reality, failure to awaken to understanding . . . is the result of unknowing.

Truth is That which Is, Reality is That which is revealing Itself, the Way is open to every soul.

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